

ENOCH'S CHRISTIANITY
THE
Almost-Christian Discovered;
OR, THE
FALSE PROFESSOR
TRIED and CAST.

Being the Substance of Seven
SERMONS

First Preached at *Sepulchre, Lond.* 1687.
And now at the Importunity of
Friends made Publick.

The Sixth Edition.

By *WILLIAM MEADE*.

Luk. 16. 14. *And the Pharisees who were covetous,
heard all things, and they devised how to
kill him.*
Verse 15. *And Jesus said unto them, Ye
which justify your selves before men, will not
know your hearts: But thus which is highly
esteemed amongst men, is abominable in the
sight of God.*

London, Printed for Thomas Parkhurst at the
Bible and three Crowns in Chancery-lane, and
at the Bible on London-Bridge. 1692.

THE
DISCOVERED
OR THE
FALSE PROTESTANT
TRIED AND CAST.

Being the Substance of Seven
SERMONS
First Preached at Spaulding, Lond. 1661
And now at the Importunity of
Friends made Publick

The Sixth Edition.
By M^r W. MEADE.

Printed for Thomas Parkhurst at the
Sign of the Crown in Chancery Lane
1661

Printed for Thomas Parkhurst at the
Sign of the Crown in Chancery Lane
1661

To the Congregation at Sermon
chers, that were the Auditors of
these Sermons.

Grace and Peace be multiplied.

Beloved,

What the meaning of that Pro-
vidence was, that called me
to the occupation of my ca-
lent amongst you this Sum-
mer, will be best read and understood by
the effects of it upon your own souls.
The kindly increase of Grace and holiness
in heart and life, can only prove it to
have been in mercy; where this is not the
fruit of the Word, there it becomes a
Judgment. The Word Travels with life
or death, salvation or damnation, and
brings forth one or another in every soul
that hears it. I would not for a world
(were it in my power to make the choice)
that my labours, which were meant and
designed for the salvation of your immortal

The Epistle Dedicatory.

fault, to the glory of the other world, in a present pursuance of the things of your peace, should be found to have been a ministration of Death and Condemnation in the great day of Jesus Christ. Yet this (the Lord knoweth) is the too common effect of the most plain and powerful preaching of the Gospel. The waters of

47. the Sanctuary do not always beat where they come; for there are miry and marish places that shall be given to Salt, למלח נחל The same word (נחל) is elsewhere in Scripture rendered barrenness he turneth a fruitful land למלח into barrenness, so that the Judgement denounced upon these miry and marish places, is, that the curse of barrenness shall rest upon them, notwithstanding the waters of the Sanctuary overflow them.

It is sad, but certain, that the Gospel inflicteth a death of its own, as well as the Law, or else how are those Trees in Jude said to be שׁוֹמְרֵי חַיִּים, twice dead, plucked up by the roots? Yea, that which in it self is the greatest Mercy, through the interposition of many lusts, and the efficacy of this cursed sin of unbelief, turneth to the greatest Judgement, as the richest and most generous Wine

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Wine makes the sharpest King. The Lord Christ himself, the choicest Jewel that the Bowels of a God could best a perishing world withall, whose coming (himself bearing witness) was no less Errand than that of Eternal Life and Blessedness to the lost and awred Sin of Adam: Yet so bow many was he **שִׁבְבוּ מִן הָאֶבֶן**, a stone of stumbling and a Rock of offence, a Scandal and a snare, and that to both the Houses of Israel, the only professing people of God at that day in the World. And to be not a stone of stumbling in the Ministry of the Gospel to many professors to this very day, upon which they fall and are broken? When he saith, Blessed is he who never shall not be offended in me, he doth therein plainly suppose, that both in his Person and Doctrine the generality of men would be offended in him.

Not that this is the design of Christ and the Gospel, but it comes so to pass through the corruptions of the hearts of men, whereby they make light of Christ and stand out against that life and grace which the Lord Jesus by his Blood so dearly purchased, and is by the preaching of the Gospel so freely tendered, the mi-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

And refusal whereof will as surely damn
our damnation as the acceptance thereof
will secure our eternal salvation.

Oh consider! it is a thing of the most
serious concernment in the world, how we
carry our selves under the Gospel, and
with what dispositions and affections of
heart and soul seasons of grace are eme-
rained; this being taken into the conside-
ration to make it weighty, that we are the
nearer to Heaven or to hell, to Salvation
or Damnation by every Ordinance we su-
nder. Boast not therefore of priviledges
enjoyed with neglect of the important du-
ties thereby required. Remember Caper-
naitims case and tremble. As many go to
Heaven by the very gates of Hell, as many
go to Hell by the gates of Heaven in that
the number of them that profess Christ, is
greater than the number of them that
truly close with Christ.

Beloved, I know the Preaching of the
Gospel hath profelyted many of you into a
Profession; but I fear that but few of
you are brought by it to a true close with
the Lord Christ for Salvation. (I beseech
you bear with my jealousy, for it is the
fruit of a tender love, to your precious
souls.) Most men are good Christians in
the

the verdict of their own opinion, but you know the Law alloweth no man to be a witness in his own case, because their affection usually out-altereth Conscience, and self-love balketh Truth for its own interest.

The heart of man is the greatest Impostor and Cheat in the world; God himself adjusts it, Jer. 17. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things. Some of ^{Suppl} the deceits whereof you will find discovered in this Treatise, which sheweth you that every Grace hath its counterfeits, and that the highest Profession may be, where the Conversation is not.

The design hereof is not to break the bruised Reed, nor to quench the smoking Flax; nor to discourage the weakest believer, but to awaken formal Professors. I would not sad the hearts of any, whom God would not have made sad; though I know it is hard to rap up the dangerous estate and condition of a professing Hypocrite, but that the weak Christian will think himself concerned in the discovery. And therefore as I Preached a Sermon on Sincerity among you, for the support and encouragement of such, at the end of this; so I did pur-

...the ...
...with this. But ...
...of ... purposes ...
...such daily variety of ...
...your kindly acceptance of this,
...me a debtor for that.

The Dedication herself, belongs to you
as a double account, for as it had not been
dedicated but that love to your souls can-
noting it had much less been prized, but
that your importunate desire procured it:
And therefore what entertainment could it
be found in the World yet I hope I may
expect you will welcome it especially con-
sidering it was born under your Roof, and
therefore hopes to find favour in your eyes,
and room in your hearts.

Accept it I beseech you, as a publick
acknowledgement of the Engagements
which your great (and I think I may say)
importance & Respects have laid me un-
der, which I can no way compensate, but
by my prayers; and if you will take them
for satisfaction, I do promise to be your
Remembrancer at the Throne of Grace,
whilst I am.

Yours most humble servant
Matthew Mead.

TO

To the Reader.

Reader,

I know how customary it is for men to ascend the publick Stage, with premised Apologies for their weakness and unworthiness of their Labours, which is an argument that their desires (either for the sake of others profit, or their own credit, or both) are stretched beyond the tether of their abilities, and that they come to commend themselves to the Worlds censure, in a better dress than common infirmity will allow, for my own part, I may truly say with *Gibbon*, *Behold my thousand in the least*, (my Talent is the smallest) *and I in the least in my Father's house*; and therefore this appearance in publick is not the fruit of my own choice, which would rather have been in some other subject, wherein I stand in some sense indebted to the World, or else in my own Hypocrite way.

more digested, and possibly
better fitted for common acceptation,
but this is but to consult the interest
of a mans own name, which in matters
of this concern, is no better than a *sowing
to the flesh*, and the harvest of such
a Seeds-time will be *in corruption*.

Thou hast here some of the saddest
considerations imaginable presented
to thee, and that is, How far it is pos-
sible a man may go in a Profession of
Religion, and yet after all fall short
of Salvation; How far he may run, and
yet not so run as to obtain: this I say, is
sad, but not so sad as true; for our
Lord Christ doth plainly attest it, *He
strive to enter in at the strait gate, for
many, I say unto you, will seek to enter
in, and shall not be able*.

My design herein is, that the formal
sleepy Professor may be awakened,
and the close Hypocrite discovered;
but my fear is, that weak believers
may be hereby discouraged; for as it is
hard to shew how low a child of God
may fall into sin, and yet have true
grace, but that the sinner will be apt
thereupon to presume; so it is as hard
to shew how high an Hypocrite may
rise

life is a Profession, and yet have no
grace, but that the Believer will be
apt thereupon to dispond. The pre-
vention whereof I have carefully en-
deavoured, by shewing, that though
a man may go thus far, and yet be but
almost a Christian; yet a man may fall
short of this, and be a true *Christian*
notwithstanding; judg not therefore
thy state by any one *Character* thou
findest laid down of a False Professor,
but read the whole, and then make a
judgment: For I have cared, as not
to give *Childrens bread to dogs*; so not to make
use the *Dog whip* to scare the *Children*.
yet I could wish, that this *Book* might
fall into the hands of such only whom
it chiefly concerns, who *have a name*
to live, and yet are dead, being built
with the *form of Godliness*, but stran-
gers to the *power of it*. These are the
proper subjects of this Treatise: And
the Lord follow it with his blessing
where ever it comes, that it may be
an awakening word to all such, and
especially to that generation of proflig-
ate professors, (with which this Age
abounds) who, if they keep to their
Church, bow the knee, talk out a
few

and in a good time receive the Sacrament, I think they do enough for Heaven, and hereupon judge their condition safe, and their salvation sure, though there be a hell of sin in their hearts, and the poison of *Asps* under their lips, their minds being as yet carnal and unconverted, and their Conversations filthy and unsanctified. If Eternal life be of so easie attainment, and to be had as so cheap a rate, why did our Lord Christ tell us, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* And why should the Apostle perplex us with such a needles in-junction, *To give delight to make their calling and election sure?* certainly therefore it is no such easie thing to be saved, as many make it, and that thou wilt see plainly in the following Discourse: I have been somewhat short in the application of it, and therefore let me here be thy Remembrancer in five important duties.

First, *Take heed of resting in a form of Godliness, as if Duties ex opere operato could confer grace, a lifeless formal-ity*

fire is advanced to a very high degree
in the world, in a *Land of* *Providence*
was sold in the Palace of *Salem* at
a very dear rate. Alas the profession
of Godliness is but a sandy foundation
to build the hope of an immortal
Soul upon for Eternity; remember
the Lord Jesus Christ called him a
foolish builder, *that founded his house*
upon the sand, and the land event proved
him so, for it fell, and great was the fall
of it; Oh therefore lay thy foundation
by Faith upon the Rock Christ Jesus,
look to Christ through all, and rest
on Christ in all.

Secondly, *Labour to see an excellen-*
cy in the power of Godliness, a Beauty
in the life of Christ. If the means of
Grace have a loveliness in them, surely
Grace it self hath much more;
for *finis dat amabilitatem modis*, the
goodness of the means lies in its fit-
tability and serviceableness to the
end; the form of godliness hath no
goodness in it, any farther than it
treads and becomes useful to the soul
in the power and practice of Godli-
ness. The life of Holiness is the only
excellent life, it is the life of *Salem*

and Angels in heaven; yet it is the
life of God in himself. As it is a great
proof of the baseness and filthiness of
sin, that sinners seek to cover it; so it is
a great proof of the excellency of god-
liness, that so many pretend to it:
The very Hypocrites fair profession
pleads the cause of Religion, although
the Hypocrite is then really worst,
when he is seemingly best.

Thirdly, *Look upon things to come as
the greatest realities; for non entis &
non apparentis idem est affectus;* things
that are not believed, work no more
upon the affection, than if they had
no being; and this is the grand reason
why the generality of men suffer their
affection to lacquey after the world,
setting the Creature in the place of
God in their hearts.

Most men judge of the reality of
things by their visibility and proximi-
ty to Sense, and therefore the choice
of that wretched Cardinal be-
comes their Option, who would
not leave his part in *Paris*, for his
part in *Paradise*; sure whatever his
interest might be in the former, he
had little enough in the latter.

Well
may

may comfort us. He called Adam's soul
when it has chased the World for God.

Oh consider Eternity is no Dream, Mar. 9.

Hell and the Worm that never dies,

is no melancholy conceit; Heaven is

no feigned *Elysium*. There is the

greatest reality imaginable in these

things; though they are spiritual,

and out of the ken of sense, yet they

are real, and within the view of faith.

Look not therefore at the things which

are seen, but look at the things which are

not seen, for the things which are seen are

temporal, but the things which are not

seen are eternal.

Fourthly, Set a high rate upon thy

soul; what wondrously prize, we easily

part with; many men sell their souls

(at the rate of prophane *Egypt's* birth-

right) for a morsel of bread, nay for that

which (in the sense of the Holy Ghost) is

not Bread. O consider, thy soul is

the most precious and invaluable

Jewel in the world; it is black & white

in the most beautiful

piece of Gods workmanship in the

whole Creation; it is that which bears

the Image of God, and which was

bought

5760

...with the blood of the Son of
God, and shall we not set a value upon
it, and count it precious?

The Apostle Peter speaks of three
very precious things:

1. *precious Christ*, John 13 on 21

2. *precious promises*, Bengel on

John 14:23

3. *precious Faith*, Rom 8:17

Now the *preciousness* of all these lies
in their usefulness to the Soul. *Christ*
is *precious*, as being the Redeemer of
precious souls: the *promises* are *pre-
cious*, as making over this *precious*
Christ to *precious* souls: *Faith* is *precious*,
as bringing a *precious* soul to close with
a *precious* Christ, as he is held forth in
the *precious* promises. Oh take heed
that thou art not found over valuing
other things, and undervaluing thy soul.
Shall thy flesh, nay thy heart be loved;
and shall thy soul be slighted? wilt thou
cloath and pamper thy body, and yet
take no care of thy soul: this is as if
a man should feed his Dog, and starve
his Child: *Alas, for the belly, says the
belly for wear, but God shall destroy both
it and them.* Oh let not a tottering pe-
rishing carcass have all your time and
care.

...the life and salvation of the
soul were not worth the while of the
Easily, *...and I shall pass through
into an everlasting state*, wherein God
the Impartial Judge will require an
account at our hands of all our Tal-
ents and bequestments; we must then
account for time, how we have spent
that for Eternity, how we have employ-
ed it; for strength, how we have
paid out that; for Affection and Man-
ners, how they have been improved;
for the Relations we stood in here,
how they have been discharged; and
for talents and means of Grace, how
they have been improved; and last
how we have spent here, we shall ever
be answerable to God in the next world.

Reader, There are things that of all
other deserve most of, and call loud-
est for our utmost care and exertion;
though by the most least minded. To
consider what a spirit of Avarice (as the
we may judge the tree by the fruit, so
and the Principle by the practice) the
hearts of most men are filled with,
who live, as if God were not to be

feared,

Save, nor Christ to be sought, nor
lust to be mortified, nor self to be deny-
ed, nor the Scripture to be believed,
nor the Judgment-day to be minded,
nor Hell to be feared, nor Heaven to
be desired, nor the Soul to be valued,
but give up themselves to a worse
than brutish sensuality, to work all un-
cleanness with greediness, living with-
out God in the World: This is a me-
ditation fit enough to break our
hearts, if at least we were of holy Do-
mestic temper, who beheld the transgres-
sions and was grieved, and had Rivers of
waters running down his eyes, because men
kept not Gods Laws. The prevention and
correction of this Soul-destroying dis-
temper, is not the least design of this
Treatise now put into thy hand, though
the chief virtue of this Receipt lies in
its sovereign use to allwage and cure
the swelling Tympany of Hypocrisie,
yet it may serve also (with Gods bless-
ing) as a Plaster for the Plague-sore
of Prophaness, if timely applied by se-
rious Meditation, and carefully kept
on by constant Prayer.
Reader, Expect nothing of curiosity
or quaintness, for then I shall deceive
thee.

To the Reader.

thee; but if thou wouldst have a Touch-
stone for the trial of thy state, possibly
this may stead thee: If thou art either
a stranger to a profession, or an hypo-
cite under a profession, than read and
tremble, for thou art the man here
pointed at.

— *Admirato nomine de te*

Horat.

Fabula narratur—

But if the Kingdom of God be come
with power into thy soul, if Christ be
formed in thee, if thy heart be upright
and sincere with God, then read and
rejoyce.

I fear I have transgressed the bounds
of an Epistle; the Mighty God, whose
Prerogative it is to teach to prove,
whether by the tongue, or the pen,
by speaking, or writing, bless this
Tract, that it may be to thee as a
Cloud of Rain to the dry ground,
dropping farness to thy soul, that so
thy fleece being watered with the
dew of Heaven, thou mayest grow in
grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord
and Saviour Jesus Christ. In whom I am
thy

London Oct. 29. 1661. Friend and Servant,

1661.

Mat. Mende.

THE

THE CONTENTS.

THE scope of the Chapter,	11	page
The Coherence of the Text,	12	
The sense and meaning of the words,	13	
The Doctrine propounded,	20	
Two things arise from it of several meditation.	21	
Three things are premised,	21	
First there is nothing in this Doctrine should be matter of stumbling or discouragement to weak Christians,	21	
There is great use of such Doctrine	21	
To make them look to their standing,	21	
To help to raise their admiration of distinguishing love,	21	
To incite to that excellent duty of heart-searching,	21	
To engage the soul to double diligence,	21	
Secondly,	21	

Secondly, It is promised, though many go
far on the way to Heaven, and yet fall
short; yet that Soul that hath the least
true grace shall never fall short, 12

Thirdly, They that can bear such truths
as this, without serious reflections, and
Self-examination, may suspect the good-
ness of their condition, 13

The Doctrine re-assumed and demon-
strated by Scripture evidence, 1b.

1. By the example of the young man in
the Gospel, 14, 15.

2. Proof from the Parable of the Virgins,
10, to 19.

3. The Demonstration from Isa. 58. 1.
the Text opened, 20, 21, 22.

For the more distinct prosecution of the
Point, is shewed,

First, How far a man may go, what as-
tainments he may reach unto, what a
progress he may make in Religion, and
yet be but Almost a Christian,

Secondly, Whence is it that many go so
far, as that they are Almost Christi-
ans?

Thirdly, Why they are but Almost Chri-
stians, 1b.

Fourthly, What the reason is, why men
that

to go so far to be Almost Christians,
no further than to be Almost Christians,

Quest. 1. How far a man may go in the
way to Heaven, and yet be but Al-
most a Christian. This shewn in twenty
several steps,

First, A man may have much knowledg,
And yet be but Almost a Christian. 1b.

Obj. But it is not said, This is life eter-
nal, to know the only true God, and
Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent?

Answered, 26, 27, 28.

2ly, A man may have great and eminent
gifts, yea spiritual, and yet be but Al-
most a Christian. 29

1. Gifts from the common work of the
Spirit, 1b.

2. Gifts for the use and good of others, 30

3. It is beyond the power of the greatest
Gifts to change the heart, 32

4. Many have gone laden with gifts to
Hell, 1b.

Three things must be done for us, if ever
we avoid perishing, 33

5. Gifts may decay and perish, 34

Obj. But doth not the Apostle bid us
Covet after the best Gifts? Why co-
vet them earnestly, if they avail
not?

To the Reader.

not Salvation? *Answered,* 35

31y, *A man may have a high Profession of Religion, be much in external duties of Godliness, and yet be but Almost a Christian.* 36

1. *A man may profess Religion, and yet never have his heart changed,* 37

2. *A man may profess Religion, and live in a form of godliness,* 38

3. *Custom and fashion may create a man a Professor.*

4. *Many may perish under a Profession of Godliness.*

Obj, *But is it not said, He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in Heaven?* *Answered,* 44

4ly, *A man may go far in opposing his sin, and yet be but Almost a Christian.* 45

1. *A man may be convinced of sin, and yet be but Almost a Christian.* 46

2. *A man may mourn for sin,* 47

Object. *But doth not Christ pronounce Them blessed that mourn?* *Answered.*

2. *It must be more for the evil that is in sin, than the evil that comes by sin,* 48

3. *A*

The Contents.

3. *A man may make confession of his sin to God, and to others, and yet be but Almost a Christian.*

Object. *Doth not the Apostle say, If we confess our sins, he is merciful and just to forgive us our sins?* Answered, ib.

1. *Many confess sin out of Custom,* 50

2. *Many confess lesser sins,* ib.

3. *Many confess sin in general,* ib.

4. *Many confess sin only under extremity* 51

5. *Many confess sin, but with no intent to forsake it,* ib.

6. *A man may forsake sin, and yet be but Almost a Christian,* 52

Obj. *But is it not said, He that confesseth and forsaketh, shall have mercy.*

Answered, ib.

1. *A man may forsake his sin, not as sin* 53

2. *Open sins may be forsaken, when secret sins are retained,* ib.

3. *A man may let one sin go to hold another the faster.* 54

4. *A man may let sin go, and yet a sinner still,* ib.

5. *Sin may be left, and yet loved,* ib.

6. *Sin may be chained, and yet the heart*

The Contents.

heart's not changed,	55
gly, A man may hate sin, and yet be but almost a Christian,	56
Objection, Arising from Rom. 7.	55
Answered,	ib.
A man may hate sin,	
1. For the shame that attends it,	58
2. A man may hate sin more in another, than in himself,	59
3. A man may hate one sin, as being contrary to another,	ibid.
4. Not hate sin as sin, but as contrary to his beloved sin,	60
Gly, A man may make great vows and promises, strong purposes and resoluti- ons against sin, and yet be but an al- most Christian,	ibid.
1. Purposes never hurt sin,	61
2. Troubles and afflictions may provoke large purposes,	ibid.
3. Purposes may be only a temptation to put off repentance,	62
4. Nature unsanctified may make great purposes,	63
It may be from conviction of sin, appro- ving of the Law, and desire to be saved,	ibid.
gly, A man may maintain a strife and combat against sin in himself, and yet	

The Contents.

be but almost a Christian,	64, 65, 66.
5. A man may desire grace, and yet be but almost a Christian	68
What desires of grace are grace,	70
What desires of grace are not true,	ib.
6. A man may tremble at the Word of God, and yet be but an almost Christian,	77
Two-fold trembling,	ib.
7. A man may delight in the Word and Ordinances, and yet be but an almost Christian,	78
Delights that flow from grace,	74
Delights, when no grace,	ib.
8ly, A man may be a Member of the Church of Christ, and yet be but almost a Christian,	75
9ly, A man may have great hopes of heaven, and yet be but almost a Christian.	ib.
Properties of a true hope,	ib.
Groundless hopes,	79, 80.
10ly, A man may be under visible changes and yet be but almost a Christian.	The
A threefold change may be, when as yet the soul is not renewed,	81, to 85
11ly, A man may be very zealous in matters of Religion, and yet be but almost a Christian.	87, 88
Several	

The Contents.

Several kinds of zeal, none of them true
and sound, 88, to 90

12ly, A man may be much in prayer, and
yet be but almost a Christian, 96

What prayers speak a man an altogether
Christian, *ibid.* What prayers speak a
man an almost Christian, 98, 99

Whether answer of prayer, evidences the
truth of prayer. *Ans.*

Whether the stirring of the affections in
prayer, argues the truth of prayer, 101

13ly, A man may suffer for Christ, and
yet be but almost a Christian, 102

What suffering for Christ, is a note of
sincerity, 103

What suffering for Christ, is the suffering
as a Christian, *ibid.*

14ly, A man may be called of God, and
embrace his call, and yet be but an al-
most Christian, 105

Two-fold Call of God, 106

15ly, A man may have the Spirit of God,
and yet be but almost a Christian, 107

There is a having the Spirit, which is
a sure mark of Saintsship, 108

Every man that hath the Spirit, hath it
not in this manner, 109

16ly, A man may have faith, and yet be
but almost a Christian, 110

The Contents.

Saving Faith, what called, 113

Common Faith, what, 114, to 118

17ly, *A man may have a love to the people of God, and yet be but almost a Christian,* 118. *What love to the Children of God is a true love,* 120

For what an almost Christian loves a Saint, 122. *His love carnal,* 123

18yl, *A man may obey the commands of God, and yet be but almost a Christian,* ibid.

True obedience hath a three-fold property,

It is {	Evangelical,	125
	Universal,	126
	Continual,	ibid.

19ly, *A man may be sanctified, and yet be but almost a Christian,* 129

Sanctification {	Inward,	130
	Outward,	131

20ly, *A man may do all (as to external duties and worship) that a true Christian can, and yet be but almost a Christian,* 134

Wherein the difference between them doth

The Contents.

- doth lye,* 134, to 141
- ② Whence is it that many go far, and yet no farther? 147, to 150
- ② What difference between a natural conscience, and a renewed conscience? *Answered in several particulars,* 149, to 159
- ② Whence is it that many are but almost Christians, when they have gone thus far? *ibid.*
- For want of right conviction,* 168
- How to know whether our conviction is only from a natural conscience or from the Spirit,* 169, to 175
- Spiritual conviction an essential part of sound conversion,* *ibid.*
- Slight and common convictions are the cause of great Hypocrisie,* *ibid.*
- ② What is the reason that many go no farther in the profession of Religion, than to be almost Christians? 177
1. *It is because a man mistakes his own state and condition,* *ibid.*
- Five rises of this mistake,* *ib. to 182*
- Four reasons more, why it is many go no farther than to be almost Christians,* 187, 188

The Contents.

Application.

1. Inference, *Salvation is not so easie a thing as it is imagined to be,* 102
2. Inference, *What shall be the end of them who fall short of these?* 206

Use of Examination.

Two questions we should often put to our selves, What am I? Where am I? 193

Cogent Arguments for self-examination, 114, to 118

Question, How shall I come to know, whether I am an almost, or an altogether Christian? Answered in eight particulars, 199

2. *Use of Caution, To take heed of being almost, and yet but an almost Christian,* 207

This condition, of { *Greatly unprofitable,* 208
all others, { *Exceedingly unprofitable,* 209
Desperately dangerous, 217

3. *Use of Exhortation, To be not only almost, but altogether Christians, under which are five Motives,* 224

Directions for obtaining a through work in the heart, the being not only almost, but altogether Christians, 246, to the end

ACTS



ACTS 26. 28.

— Ἐν ὁλίῳ μὲν πείσεις χριστιανὸν γινέσθαι.

— *Almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian.*

IN this Chapter you have the Apostle *Pauls* Apology and Defensive Plea which he makes for himself against those blind *Jews* which did so maliciously prosecute him before *Agrippa*, *Festus*, *Bernice*, and the Council.

In which Plea he doth chiefly insist upon three things :

The manner of his life before Conversion.

The manner of his Conversion.

The manner of his life after Conversion.

How he lived before Conversion, he tells you from *verse 4. to 13.*

B 4.

How

The almost Christian discovered, or,

How God wrought on him to conversion, he tells you from v. 13, to 18.

How he lived after conversion, he tells you from v. 19, to 23.

Before conversion he was very Pharisical.

The manner of his conversion was very wonderful:

The fruit of his conversion was very remarkable.

Before conversion he persecuted the Gospel which others preached: after conversion he preached the Gospel which himself had persecuted.

While he was a persecutor of the Gospel, the Jews loved him; but now that (by the Grace of God) he was become a preacher of the Gospel, Verse 21. now the Jews hate him, and sought to kill him.

He was once against Christ, and then many were for him; but now that he was for Christ, all were against Verse 9. him; his being an enemy to Jesus, made others his friends; but when he came to own Jesus, then they became his enemies.

And this was the great charge they had against him, that of a great Opposer,

The false Professor tryed and cast.

ser, he was become a great Professor.

Because God hath changed him, *Hic videtur*
therefore this intriged them: As if they *mibi*
would be the worse, because God had *etiam Christi*
made him better. God had wrought *isti.*
on him by Grace, and they seem to
envy him the Grace of God.

He preached no Treason, nor sowed
no Sedition; only he preached Re-
pentance, and Faith in Christ, and the
Resurrection, and for this he was call-
ed in question.

This is the Breviate and Sum of
Pauls Defence and Plea for himself,
which you find in the sequel of the
Chapter had a different effect upon his
Judges.

Festus seems to censure him, v. 24.

Agrippa seems to be convinced by
him, v. 28.

The whole Bench seems to acquit
him, v. 30, 31.

Festus he thinks *Paul* was beside
himself.

Agrippa he is almost perswaded to
be such a one as himself.

Festus thinks him mad, because he *Dei sapientia mundus est insanus*
did not understand the Doctrine of *Male in col.*
Christ, and the Resurrection: *Ad hoc*
learning hath made thee mad. B 3 A

tar be-
nem esse
aricum
in-
The almost Christian discovered, or,
Agrippa he is so affected with his
Plea, that he is almost wrought into
his Principle: Paul pleads so effectually
for his Religion, that Agrippa
seems to be upon the turning-point to
his profession.

Then Agrippa said to Paul, *Almost
thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

Almost] ἐν ὁλίγῳ, so the Greek, the
words make some debate among the
Learned, I shall not trouble you with
the various hints upon them by *Valla,*
Simplicius, Baza, Erasmus, and others.
I take the words as we read them, and
they shew what an efficacy *Paul's Do-*
ctrine had upon *Agrippa's Conscience.*
Though he would not be Converted,
yet he could not but be convinced.
His conscience was touched, though
his heart was not renewed.

servat.
There is that in Religion, which car-
ries its own evidence along with it, even
to the conscience of ungodly men.

Thou persuadest me] πειδύς, the
word is from the Hebrew פתח and it
signifies both *saudere* and *persuadere*, ei-
ther to use arguments to prevail, or
to prevail by the arguments used.

Now it is to be taken in the latter
sense

audere
conan-
s, persua-
are oft of
circum-
sua.

The false Professor tryd and cast,
sense here, to shew the influence of *Pauls* argument upon *Agrippa*, which had almost profelyted him to the profession of Christianity.

Almost thou perswadest me to be a Christian.

A Christian] *χριστιανὸν λέγεις.*

I hope I need not tell you what a Christian is, though I am perswaded many that are called *Christians*, do not know what a Christian is, or if they do, yet they don't know what it is to be a Christian.

A Christian is a Disciple of Jesus Christ; one that believes in, and follows Christ. As one that embraces the Doctrine of *Arminius*, is called an *Arminian*; and as he that owns the Doctrine and way of *Luther*, is called a *Lutheran*; so he that embraces, and owns, and follows the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, he is called a Christian.

The word is taken more largely, and more strictly; more largely, and so all that profess Christ come in the flesh, are called Christians, in opposition to *Hearthens* that do not know Christ; and to the poor blind *Jews*, that will not own Christ; and to the *Mahometan*.

*The almost Christian discovered or,
Mahometan, that prefers Mahomet a-
bove Christ.*

But now in Scripture, the word is
of a more strict and narrow acceptati-
on, it is used only to denominate the
true Disciples and followers of Christ,
*Acts 11. 26. The Disciples were first
called Christians at Antioch, 1 Pet. 4. 16.
If any man suffer as a Christian, let him
not be ashamed, that is, as Member, and
Disciple of Christ, and so in the Text,
Almost thou perswadest me to be a Chri-
stian.*

The word is used but in these three
places (as I find) in all the new Testa-
ment, and in each of them it signifies
in the sense afore-mentioned.

alk Nor.
Rhem.
est.

The *Italians* make the name to be
a name of reproach among them, and
do usually abuse the word Christian to
signifie a fool.

Cor. 1.
8.

But if, as the Apostle saith, *the
Preaching of Christ* is to the World
foolishness, then it is no wonder that
the Disciples of Christ are to the
world *fools*.

Tim. 3.
6.

Yet it is true (in a sound sense) that
so they are. For the whole of godliness
is a Mystery.

A

The false Professor repel and reject

A man must die, that would live;
he must be empty that would be full;
he must be lost, that would be found;
he must have nothing that would have
all things; he must be blind, that would
have illumination; he must be condemn-
ed, that would have redemption; so 1 Cor.
he must be a fool, that would be a ^{II.}
*Christian. If any man among you seems
to be wise, let him become a fool, that he
may be wise.*

He is the true Christian, that is the
Worlds fool, but wise to Salvation.

Thus you have the sense and mean-
ing of the words briefly explained.

The Text needs no division, and
yet it is pity the *almost* should not be
divided from the *Christian*.

Though it is of little avail to divide
them as they are linked in the Text,
unless I could divide them as they are
united in your hearts; this would be
a blessed division, if the *almost* might
be taken from the *Christian*: That so
you may not be only ἐν ὀλίγῳ, but
ἐν πολλῷ, not only *propemodum*, but *ad-
modum*, not only *almost* but altogether
Christians.

This is Gods work to effect it; but
it

The plough Christian discovered, or,
it is our duty to perswade to it, and
O that God would help me to manage
this Subject so, that you may say in
the conclusion, Thou perswadest me
(not almost, but) altogether to be a
Christian.

The Observation that I shall pro-
pound to handle, is this :

doct.

*There are very many in the world, that
are almost, and yet but almost Christi-
ans ; many that are near Heaven, and
yet are ne're the near ; many that are
within a little of Salvation, and yet shall
never enjoy the least Salvation ; they are
within sight of Heaven, and yet shall ne-
ver have a sight of God.*

There are two sad expressions in
Scripture, which I cannot but take no-
tice of in this place.

*The one is concerning the truly righ-
teous.*

*The other is concerning the seemingly
righteous.*

It is said of the truly righteous, he
shall scarcely be saved ; and it is said of
the seemingly righteous, he shall be
almost saved : Thou art not far from the
Kingdom of God, Mark 12. 24.

The righteous shall be saved with

a

1645 co-
vau.
Pct. 4.
8.

The false Professor tried and cast.

a *searcely*, that is, through much difficulty, he shall go to heaven through many sad fears of hell.

The Hypocrite shall be saved with an *almost*; that is, he shall go to hell through many fair hopes of heaven. *Quod oia
fit fit
quod fere
fit non*

There are two things arise from hence of very serious Meditation.

The one is, how oft a Believer may miscarry, how low he may fall, and yet have true Grace.

The other is, how far an Hypocrite may go in the way to Heaven, how high he may attain, and yet have no Grace.

The Saint may be cast down very near to hell, and yet shall never come there; and the Hypocrite may be lifted up very near to Heaven, and yet never come there.

The Saint may almost perish, and yet be saved eternally; the Hypocrite may almost be saved, and yet perish finally.

For the Saint at worst is really a Believer, and the Hypocrite at best is really a Sinner.

Before I handle the *Doftrine*, I must premise three things, which are of great use for the establishing of weak believers,

10 *The almost Christian discovered, or,*
believers, that they may not be shaken
and discouraged by this Doctrine.

First, There is nothing in the Do-
ctrine that should be matter of stum-
bling or discouragement to weak Chri-
stians.

The Gospel doth not speak these
things to wound believers; but to a-
waken sinners and formal professors.

As there are none more averse than
weak believers, to apply the promises
and comforts of the Gospel to them-
selves, for whom they are properly de-
signed: So there are none more ready
than they, to apply the threats & seve-
rest things of the word to themselves,
for whom they were never intended.

Mat. 26. 16. As the Disciples, when Christ told
them, *One of you shall betray me,* they
that were innocent suspected them-
selves most, and therefore cry out *Ma-
ster is it I?*

So weak Christians, when they hear
sinners reprov'd, or the Hypocrite laid
open in the Ministry of the Word, they
presently cry out, *Is it I?*

It is the Hypocrites fault to sit un-
der the tryals and discoveries of the
Word, and yet not to mind them.

And

And it is the weak Christians fault to draw sad conclusions of their own state from premises which nothing concern them.

There is indeed great use of such Doctrine as this is, to all believers.

1. To make them look to their standing, upon what bottom they are, and to see that the foundation of their hope be well laid, that they build not upon the Sand, but upon a Rock. Mar. 7. 24. 26.

2. It helps to raise our admiration of the distinguishing-love of God, in bringing us into the way everlasting, when so many perish from the way; and in over-powring our souls into a true conversion, when so many take up with a graceless profession. Psal. 139. 24.

3. It incites to that excellent duty of heart-searching, that so we approve our selves to God in sincerity. 1 Cor. 13.

4. It engages the soul in double diligence, that it may be found not only believing, but persevering in Faith to the end.

These duties (and such as these are) make this Doctrine of use to all believers; but they ought not to make use of it as a stumbling-block in the way of their peace and comfort. My

16 The *unhappy Christian discovered, or,*

My design in Preaching on this Subject, is not to make sad the souls of those whom Christ will not have made sad; I would bring water, not
Matth. 12. to *quench the Flax that is smoking*, but
20. to put out that false fire that is of the sinners own kindling, lest walking all his days by the light thereof, he shall
Ila. 50. 1. at last lye down in sorrow.

My aim is to level the Mountain of the sinners confidence, not to weaken the hand of the Believers faith and dependance; to awaken and bring in secure formal sinners, not to discourage weak believers.

Secondly, I would premise this: though many may go far (very far) in the way to Heaven, and yet fall short; yet that soul that hath the least true grace, shall never fall short. *The righte-*
Job 7. 9. *ous shall hold on his way.*

Though some may do very much in a way of duty (as I shall show hereafter) and yet miscarry; yet that soul that doth duty with the least sincerity, shall never miscarry. *For he*
Psal. 7. 10. *saveth the upright in heart.*

The least measure of true grace is as saving as the greatest; it saves as surely,
ly,

ly, though not so comfortably. The least grace gives a full interest in the Blood of Christ, whereby we are thoroughly purged; and it gives a full interest in the strength and power of Christ, whereby we shall be certainly preserved.

Christ keeps faith in the soul, and faith keeps the soul in Christ; and so we are kept by the Power of God, through faith to salvation.

Thirdly, I would premise this; They that can hear such truths as this, without serious reflection, and self-examination, I must suspect the goodness of their condition.

You'll suspect that man to be next door to a Bankrupt, that never casts up his shop, nor looks over his books; and I as verily think that man an Hypocrite, that never searches nor deals with his own heart.

He that goes on in a road of duties without any rub or doubting of his state, I doubt no mans state more than his.

When we see a man sick, and yet not sensible, we conclude the tokens of death are upon him.

So

So when sinners have a sense of their spiritual condition, it is plain that they are dead in sin, the Tokens of Eternal Death are upon them.

These things being premised (which I desire you would carry along in your mind while we travel through this subject) I come to speak to the Proposition more distinctly and closely.

Doct. That there are very many in the world that are almost, and yet but almost Christians.

I shall demonstrate the truth of the Proposition, and then proceed to a more distinct prosecution.

1. I shall demonstrate the truth of the proposition, and I shall do it by Scripture evidence, which speaks plain and fully to the case.

1. The young man in the Gospel is an eminent proof of this truth, in *Mat. 19. 16, to 23.* There you read of one that came to Christ to learn of him the way to Heaven; *Good Master, Verse 16. what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?*

Verse 17. Our Lord Christ tells him, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments; and when Christ tells him which, he

The false Professer *tried and*

he answers, *Lord all these have I kept*
from my youth up: what lack I yet?

Now do but see how far this man
went.

1. *He obeyed*] he did not only hear
the commands of God, but he kept
them; now the Scripture saith, *Bles-*
sed is he that hears the word of God, and Luk. 11. 8
keeps it.

2. *He obeyed universally*] not this
or that command, but both this and
that; he did not halve it with God,
or pick and chuse which were easiest
to be done, and leave the rest: no but,
he obeys all; *all these things have I kept.*

3. *He obeyed constantly*] not in a fit
of zeal only, but in a continued series
of duty: his goodness was not (as
Ephraims) like the morning dew, that
passes away; no, *all these things have I*
kept from my youth up.

Ho 6. 4

4. *He professeth his desire to know and*
do more] to perfect that which was lack-
ing of his obedience; and therefore he
goes to Christ to instruct him in his
duty: *Master what lack I yet?* Now
would you not think this a good man
alas, how few go thus far!

And yet as far as he went, he went

not

not far enough; He was almost, and yet
 Verse 21. but almost a Christian; for he was an
 unsound Hypocrite; he forsakes Christ
 at last, and cleaves to his lust.

This then is a full proof of the truth
 of the Doctrine.

A second proof of it, is that of the
 Parable of the Virgins, Mat. 25. 1. and
 so on.

See what a progress they make, how
 Ps. 45. 11. far they go in a profession of Christ.

1. They are called *Virgins*] Now this
 is a name given in the Scripture, both
 in the Old Testament, and the New;
 to the Saints of Christ, Cant. 1. 3. The
 1 Cor. 11. 2, 3. *Virgins love thee*: So Rev. 14. 4. The
 one hundred forty and four thousand
 that stood with the Lamb on mount
 Sion, are called *Virgins*. They are cal-
 led *Virgins*, because they are not de-
 2 Pet. 1. 4. filed with the corruptions that are in
 the world through lust.

Mat. 25. 1. Now these here seem to be of that
 sort, for they are called *Virgins*.

Verse 3. 2. They take their Lamps] that is,
 they make a profession of Christ.
 Verse 3. 3. They had some kind of Oyl in their
 Lamps] as appears, v. 8. they had some
 convictions, and some faith; (though

The false Professor tryed and cast

not the faith of Gods Elect) to keep
their profession alive, to keep the
Lamp burning.

4. *They went*] Their profession was
not an idle profession, they did per-
form duties, frequent Ordinances, and
do many things commanded; they
make a progress, *they went*.

5. *They went forth*] They went, and
outwent, they left many behind them;
this speaks out their separation from
the world.

6. *They went with the wise Virgins*] 13.
They joyned themselves to those who
had joyned themselves to the Lord,
and were companions of them that
were the companions of Christ.

7. *They go forth to meet the Bride-
groom*] This speaks out their owning
and seeking after Christ.

8. When they heard the cry of the
Bridegroom coming, *they arose and*
trimmed their Lamps; they profess
Christ more highly, hoping now to go
in with the Bridegroom.

9. *They sought for true grace*] Now,
don't we say, the desires of grace are
grace? and so they are, if true and
timely, if found and seasonable.

Why

The Almost Christian discovered, or,

Why lo here a desire of grace in these Virgins, *give us of your Oyl.*

It was a desire of true grace, but it was not a true desire of grace; it was not true, because not timely; unsound, as being unseasonable; it was too late.

Their folly was in not taking Oyl, when they took their Lamps; their time of seeking grace was when they came to Christ, it was too late to seek it when Christ came to them. They should have sought for that when they took up their profession; it was too late to seek it at the coming of the Bridegroom.

Verse 10.

And therefore *they were shut out*; and though they cry for entrance, *Lord,*

Verse 11.

Lord, open to us; yet the Lord Christ tells them, *I know you not.*

Verse 12.

You see how far these Virgins go in a profession of Jesus Christ, and how long they continue in it, even till the Bridegroom came; they go to the very doors of Heaven, and there (like the Sodomites) perish with their hands upon the very threshold of Glory.

They were *almost Christians*, and yet but *almost*; almost saved, and yet perish.

You that are professors of the Gospel

Gospel of Christ, stand and tremble. if they that have gone beyond us fall short of heaven, what shall become of us that fall short of them?

If they that are Virgins, that profess Christ, that have some faith in their profession (such as it is,) that have some fruit in their faith, that outstrip others: that seek Christ, that improve their profession, and suit themselves to their profession, nay, that seek grace; if such as these be but *almost Christians*, Lord, what are we?

If these two witnesses be not sufficient to prove the truth, and confirm the credit of the proposition:

Take a third; and that shall be from the Old Testament, *Isa. 58.2.* See what God saith of that people; he gives them a very high character for a choice people one would think.

They seek me daily, they delight to know my way; as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinance of their God; they ask of me the Ordinance of Justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

See how far these went; if God had not said they were rotten and unsound.

we should have took them for the
 Jer. 50. 8. *He-Goats before the Flock, and ranked*
them among the Worthies : pray ob-
serve.

1. *They seek God.]* Now this is the
 proper Character of a true Saint, to
 seek God. True Saints are called seek-
 Pfal. 24. 6. *ers of God : This is the Generation of*
them that seek him, that seek thy face, O
Jacob, or O God of Jacob.

Lo here a Generation of them that
 seek God, and are not these the Saints
 of God? Nay farther.

2. *They seek him daily.]* Here's di-
 ligence backed with continuance ☐
 ☐ *day by day ; that is, every day*
from day to day. They did not seek
him by fits and girds, nor in a time of
trouble and affliction only, as many do.

Lord in trouble have they visited thee,
they poured out a prayer when thy chast-
ening was upon them, Isa. 26. 16. Many,
when God visits them, then they visit
him, but not till then ; when God
poureth out his afflictions, then they
pour out their Supplications. This is
 Joh. 1. 5. *Sea-mens devotion ; when the storms*
have brought them to their wits end,
then they cry to the Lord in their trouble,
 Psal.

Pfal. 107. 27, 28. Many never try to God till they are at their wits end; they never come to God for help, so long as they can help themselves.

But now these here, whom God speaks of, are more zealous in their devotion; the others make a virtue of necessity, but these seem to make conscience of duty; for saith God, *they seek me daily.*

Sure this is (one would think) a Note of sincerity.

Job saith of the Hypocrite, *Will he Job 27. 10*
always call upon God? Surely no; but now this people call upon God always, *They seek him daily:* certainly these are no Hypocrites.

3. Saith God, *They delight to know my ways.* Sure this frees them from the suspicion of hypocrisie, for *Job 21.*

14. They say unto God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

4. *They are as a Nation that did righteousness.* Not only as a Nation that spake Righteousness, or knew Righteousness, or professed Righteousness, but as a Nation that did Righteousness, that practised nothing but what was just and right. They ap-

The Almost Christian discovered, or,
 peared to the Judgment of the World
 as good as the best.

5. *They forsook not the Ordinances of their God.]* They seem true to their Principles, constant to their Profession, better than many among us, that cast off duties, and forsake the Ordinances of God; but these hold out in their profession, *They forsook not the Ordinances of God.*

6. *They ask of me (saith God) the Ordinances of Justice.]* They will not make their own will the Rule of right and wrong, but the Law and Will of God; and therefore in all their dealings with men, they desire to be guided and counselled by God. *They ask of me the Ordinances of Justice.*

7. *They take delight in approaching to God.]* Sure this can't be the guise of an Hypocrite; *will he delight himself in the Almighty, saith Job? no he will not.*

Though God is the chief delight of man, (having every thing in him to render him lovely, as was said of *Titus Vespasian*) yet the hypocrite will not delight in God.

Till the affections are made spiritual,
 there

there is no affection to things that are spiritual. God is a spiritual Good, and therefore hypocrites cannot delight in God. But these are a people that delight in approaching to God.

*Hypocri
neque
um ne
divina
bet in d
ciis.*

8. They were a people that were much in fasting, as you may see, v. 3. *Wherefore have we fasted (say they) and thou seest not?* Now this is a duty that doth not suppose and require truth of grace only in the heart, but strength of grace.

No man (saith our Lord Christ) *Mat. 9. 1*
*puts new wine into old bottles; lest the
bottles break, and the wine run out.*

New wine is strong, and old bottles weak; and the strong wine breaks the weak Vessel: this is a reason Christ gives, why his Disciples who were newly converted (and but weak as yet) were not exercised with this austere discipline.

But this people here mentioned, *Assemb*
were a people that fasted often, *Annor.*
ed their souls much, wore themselves *upon th*
out by frequent practices of humili- *place*
liation.

Sure therefore this *was new wine in
new bottles;* this must needs be a people
strong

The almost Christian discovered, or,
 strong in grace; here seems to be
 grace, not only in truth, but also in
 growth. And yet for all this, they
 were no better than a Generation of
 Hypocrites; they made a godly pro-
 gress, and went far, but yet they went
 not far enough; they were cast off by
 God after all. I hope by this time the
 truth of the point is sufficiently a-
 vouched and confirmed, that a man
 may be (yea very many are) *almost*
 and yet (no more than *but almost* Chri-
 stians.

Now for the more distinct prosecu-
 tion of the point.

1. *I shall shew you step by step, how
 far a man may go, what attainments he
 may reach unto, how specious and singu-
 lar a progress he may make in Religion,
 and yet be but almost a Christian when
 all is done.*

2. *I will shew you whence it is, That
 many men go so far as that they are al-
 most Christians.*

3. *Why they are but almost Christians
 when they have gone thus far.*

4. *What the reason is, why men that
 go thus far as to be almost Christians, yet
 go no farther than to be almost Christians.*

1. How

1. *How far may a man go in the way* Quest.
to heaven, and yet be but almost a Chri-
stian?

This I shall shew you in twenty se- *Ansr.*
veral steps.

1. *A man may have much knowledg,*
much light; he may know much of God
and his will, much of Christ and his ways,
and yet be but almost a Christian.

For though there can be no grace
without knowledg, yet there may be
much knowledg where there is no
grace: illumination often goes before,
when conversion never follows after.
The subject of knowledg is the un-
derstanding, the subject of holiness is
the will. Now a man may have his
understanding enlightened, and yet his
will not at all sanctified. He may have
an understanding to know God, and
yet want a will to obey God. The A-
postle tells us of some, that *when they*
knew God, yet they glorified him not as Rom. I.
God. 21.

To make a man altogether a Christi-
an, there must be light in the head,
and heat in the heart, knowledg in the
understanding, and zeal in the affections.

Some have zeal and no knowledg,

The almost Christian discovered, or,

that is blind devotion; some have knowledg and no Zeal, that is fruitless speculation. But where knowledg is joyned with Zeal, that makes a true Christian.

Object.

But is it not said, *This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent?* Joh. 17.3.

Sol.

It is not every knowledg of God and Christ that interests the soul in life eternal. For why then do the Devils perish? they have more knowledg of God than all the men in the World; for though by their fall, they lost their holiness, yet they lost not their knowledg.

They are called *Δαίμονες* from their knowledg, and yet they are *Διabolos* from their malice, Devils still.

Knowledg may fill the head, but it will never better the heart, if there be not somewhat else. The Pharisees

Rom. 2.
17, 18.

*Sinitie sit-
pientes bu-
mundi
sapienter
discendere
ad infer-
num.*

had much knowledg; Behold thou art called a Jew, and reatest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, &c. and yet they were a generation of hypocrites.

Alas, how many have gone loaded with knowledg to hell?

Though

The false Professor tryed and cast.

27

Though it is true, that it is life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ; yet it is as true, that many do know God and Jesus Christ, that shall never see life eternal.

There is, you must know a twofold knowledg; one is common, but not saving; the other is not common, but saving; common Knowledg is that which floats in the head, but doth not influence nor affect the heart. This knowledg Reprobates may have: *Balaam saw Christ from the top of the Rocks and from the Hills.*

Numb. 23.
10.

Naturalists say, that there is a pearl in the Toads-head; and yet her belly is full of Poyson. The *French* have a Berry which they call *rose de spine*, the Grape of a Thorn,

The common Knowledg of Christ is the Pearl in the Toads-head, the Grape that grows upon Thorns, it may be found in men unsanctified.

And then there is a saving Knowledg of God and Christ, which doth include the assent of the mind, and the consent of the will; this is a Knowledg that implies faith; *By his knowledg shall my righteous servant justifie many.*

Isa. 53. 11.

And this is that Knowledg which leads to life eternal: Now whatever that measure of knowledg is, which a man may have of God, and of Jesus Christ, yet if it be not this saving knowledg, knowledg joyned with affection and application, he is but almost a Christian.

He only knows God aright, who knows how to obey him, and obeys according to his knowledg of him; *Psal. 111. good understanding have all they that do his Commandments.*

All knowledg without this, makes a man but like *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image, with a head of Gold, and feet of clay.

Some know, but to know.

Some know, to be known.

Some know to practise what they know.

Now to know, but to know, that's curiosity.

To know, to be known, that's vain-glory.

But to know, to practise what we know, that is Gospel duty.

This makes a man a compleat Christian; the other without this makes a man almost, and yet but almost a Christian.

2. A man may have great and eminent gifts, yea spiritual gifts, and yet be but almost a Christian. The gift of prayer is a spiritual gift, now this a man may have, and yet be but almost a Christian; for the gift of prayer is one thing, the grace of prayer is another.

The gift of preaching and prophesying is a spiritual gift, now this a man may have, and yet be but almost a Christian. *1 Cor. 12. 10.* Judas was a great Preacher, so were they that came to Christ, and said, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, &c. *Mat. 7. 22.*

You must know, that it is not gifts, but grace, which makes a Christian: For,

1. Gifts are from a common work of the Spirit, now, a man may partake of all the common gifts of the Spirit, and yet be a Reprobate, for therefore they are called common, because they are indifferently dispensed by the Spirit to good and bad; to them that are Believers, and to them that are not.

They that have grace, have gifts; and they that have no grace, may have the same gifts; for the Spirit works in

in both; may in this sense, he that hath no grace, may be under a greater work of the Spirit (*quoad hoc*) as to this thing, than he that hath most grace; a graceless professor may have greater gifts than the most holy Believer. He may out-pray, and out-preach, and out-do them; but they in sincerity and integrity out-go him.

Eph. 4. 12.

Donum in-
strum ad-
monitionis.

The Ra-
ven was
an unclean

Bird, God
makes use
of her to
feed Eli-
shah;

though
she was
not good
meat, yet
it was
good
meat she
brought

2. Gifts are for the use and good of others, they are given *in ordine ad alium*, as the School-men speak, for the profiting and edifying of others; so says the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. 7. *They are given to profit withal.*

Now a man may edifie another by his gifts, and yet be unedified himself; He may be profitable to another, and yet unprofitable to himself.

A lame man may with his Crutch point to thee the right way, and yet not be able to walk in it himself: A crooked Taylor may make a suit to fit a streight body, though it fit not him that made it, because of his crookedness.

The Church (Christs garden en-
closed) may be watered through a wood-
en gutter, the Sun may give light
through

The false Professor tryed and cast.

through a fluttish window; and the Field may be well sowed with a dirty fland.

The efficacy of the Word doth not depend upon the Authority of him that speaks it, but upon the Authority of the God that bleeses it. So that another may be converted by my preaching, and yet I may be a *cast-away* notwithstanding. *Balaam* makes a clear ^{I Cor. 9.} and rare prophesie of Christ, and yet ^{27.} he hath no benefit by Christ; *There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel.* But yet *Balaam* shall have no benefit by it; *I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh,* Numb. 24. 17.

God may use a mans Gifts to bring another unto Christ, when he himself, whose Gifts God uses, may be a stranger unto Christ; one man may confirm another in the faith, and yet himself may be a stranger unto the faith. *Pen-Alteton* strengthens and confirms *Sanders*, in *Q. Maries* days, to stand in the truth he had Preached, and to Seal it with his blood, and yet afterwards plays the Apostate himself.

Scultrius tells us of one *Johannes Speise-*

Acts and
Mon. last
Edit. 3. v
p. 141.

Sealter.
Annal. p.
118.

an almost Christian discovered; or,

Spisernus, a famous Preacher of *Ansborough* in *Germany*, in the year 1523. who preached the Gospel so powerfully, that divers common *Harlots* were converted, and became good Christians, and yet himself afterwards turned Papist, and came to a miserable end.

Thus the Candle may burn bright to light others in their Work, and yet afterwards go out in a stink.

3. It is beyond the power of the greatest gifts to change the heart; a man may preach like an Apostle, pray like an Angel, and yet may have the heart of a Devil. It is grace only that can change the heart; the greatest gifts can't change it, but the least grace can; gifts may make a man a Scholar, but grace makes a man a Believer.

Now if gifts can't change the heart, then a man may have the greatest gifts, and yet be but *almost a Christian*.

4. Many have gone loaden with gifts to Hell: no doubt *Judas* had great gifts, for he was a Preacher of the Gospel; and our Lord Jesus Christ would not set him in the work, & nor fit him for the work; yet *Judas* is gone

The false Professor tried and cast
to his own place; the Scribes and Pha-
risees were men of great gifts, and yet
where is the wise, where is the Scribe?

The Preaching of the Cross, is to them
that perish foolishness.

1 Cor. 1.
20. and
1.18.

Them that perish, who are they?
who? the wise and the learned, both
among Jews and Greeks; these are
called them that perish. *Surgunt indocti
& rapiunt cœlum dum nos cum doctrina
nostra in Gehennam detrudimur*, said a
great Bishop when he saw a poor shep-
herd weeping over a Toad. The poor
illiterate world attain to Heaven, while
we with all our learning fall into hell.

There are three things must be done
for us, if ever we would avoid perish-
ing.

We must be thoroughly convinced
of sin.

We must be really united to
Christ.

We must be instated in the Cove-
nant of Grace.

Now the greatest gifts cannot stead
us in any one of these.

They cannot work thorough con-
victions.

They cannot effect our Union.

They

They cannot bring us into Covenant-relation.

And consequently they cannot preserve from eternal perishing: and if so, then a man may have the greatest gifts and yet be but almost a Christian.

Joh. 4. 14.

§. Gifts may decay and perish; they do not lie beyond the reach of corruption; indeed Grace shall never perish, but Gifts will; Grace is incorruptible, though Gifts are not; Grace is a spring, whose waters fail not, but the streams of Gifts may be dried up. If grace be corruptible in its own nature, as being but a creature; yet it is incorruptible in regard of its conserver, as being the new creature; he that did create it in us, will conserve it in us; he that did begin it, will also finish it.

Isa. 58. 11.

Heb. 12. 2.

Gifts have their root in nature, but Grace hath its root in Christ; and therefore though Gifts may die and wither, yet Grace shall abide for ever.

Now if Gifts are perishing, then (though he that hath the least grace is a Christian, yet) he that hath the greatest gifts may be but almost a Christian.

Object.

But doth not the Apostle bid us to-
vet earnestly the best gifts? 1 Cor 12.

31. Why must we covet them, and covet them earnestly, if they avail not to salvation?

Gifts are good, though they are not *Answ.* the best good; they are excellent, but there is somewhat more excellent; so it follows in the same verse: *yet I shew unto you a more excellent way*, and that is the way of Grace: one dram of grace is more worth than a Talent of Gifts; Gifts may make us rich towards men, but it is Grace that makes us *rich towards God*,

Our Gifts profit others, but Grace *Luk. 12.* profits *our selves*; that whereby I *pro- 21.* fit another is good, but what whereby I am profited my self is better.

Now because Gifts are good, therefore we ought to covet them; but because they are not the best good, therefore we ought not to rest in them; we must covet Gifts for the good of others, that they may be edified; and we must covet Grace for the good of our own souls, that they may be saved; for whosoever be bettered by our Gifts, yet we shall miscarry without Grace.

3. *A man may have a high profession of*

of Religion, be much in external duties of godliness; and yet be but almost a Christian. Mark what our Lord Christ tells them in *Mat. 7. 21.* Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; that is, not every one that makes a profession of Christ, shall therefore be owned for a true Disciple of Christ; *All are not Israel that are of Israel*; nor are all Christians that make a profession of Religion.

Rom. 9. 6.

What a goodly profession had Judas! he followed Christ, left all for Christ, he preached the Gospel of Christ, he cast out Devils in the name of Christ, he eat and drank at the Table of Christ, and yet Judas was but an hypocrite.

Most professors are like Lillies, fair in shew, but foul in scent; or like pepper, hot in the mouth, but cold in the stomach. The finest lace may be upon the coarsest cloth.

It is a great deceit to measure the substance of our Religion, by the bulk of our profession; and to judg of the strength of our graces, by the length of our duties. The Scriptures speak of some, who having a form of godliness yet

yet deny the power thereof. Deny the 2 Tim. 3. 5
power, that is, they don't live in the
practice of those graces which they
pretend to in their duties; he that pre-
tends to godliness by a specious pro-
fession, and yet doth not practise god-
liness by a holy conversation, he hath a
form, but denies the power.

Hugo compares such to the Ostrich, *Loquitur
hic ut Pisco,
vivit ut
Gallonium.*
qui alas habet, sed non volat, which hath
great wings, but yet flies not; many
have the wings of a fair profession, but
yet use them not to mount upward
in spiritual affections, and a heavenly
conversation.

But to clear the truth of this, That
a man may make a high profession of
Religion, and yet be but almost a
Christian; take a four-fold evidence.

1. If a man may profess Religion,
and yet never have his heart changed,
nor his state better'd, then he may be
a great professor, and yet be but al-
most a Christian.

But a man may profess Religion, and
yet never have his heart changed, nor
his state renewed.

He may be a constant hearer of the
Word, and yet be a Sinner still; he
may

may come often to the Lord's Table, and yet go away a sinner as he came; we must not think that duties, *ex opere operato*, can confer Grace.

Many a soul hath been converted by Christ in an Ordinance, but never was any soul converted by an Ordinance without Christ.

And doth Christ convert all that sit under the Ordinances? surely no; for

1 Cor. 2. to some, *the word is a saviour of death* unto death.

And if so, then it is plain, that no man may profess Religion, and yet be but almost a Christian.

2. A man may profess Religion, and live in a form of Godliness in Hypocrisy, Isa. 48. 1. *Here ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. What do ye think of these? They make mention of the name of the Lord, there is their profession; but not in truth, nor in righteousness, there is their dissimulation; and indeed there could be no hypocrite*

Tablification in a religious sense, were it not
came a profession of Religion; for he
is wicked and carnal, and vile
wardly, and appears to be so out-
wardly, he is no hypocrite, but is
never that he appears, and appears what he
Order.

But he that is one thing really, and *Hypocrita*
another thing seemingly, is carnal and *cupit vide-*
holy, and yet seems to be good and *ri justus.*
deceitfully, he is an hypocrite.

Thus the *Casuits* define hypocrisie *Toller in-*
to be *Simulatio sanctitatis*, a counter-*stit. Sa-*
biting of holiness, and this fits exact-*cred. l. 8.*
c. 9.

with the Greek word *ὑποκρίτης*,
and which is from *ὑποκρίνομαι*, to counter-
act.

And to this purpose, the Hebrews *פנים*
have two words for hypocrites, *Panim* *הנים*
which signifies *facies*, and *Chanepim*, *from the*
which signifies *Counterfeits*, from *Chaz* *root.*
חנף, to dissemble, so that he is an hy-
pocrite that dissembles Religion, and
weareth the face of holiness, and yet is
without the grace of holiness; he ap-
pears to be in semblance, what he is
not in substance, he wears a form of
godliness without, only as a cover of a
profane heart within.

He

He hath a *profession* that he may not be thought wicked; but it is but a *profession*, and therefore he is wicked.

He is the Religious Hypocrite; Religious, because he pretends to it; and yet an Hypocrite, because he doth but pretend to it; he is like many men in a Consumption, that have fresh looks, and yet rotten Lungs: or like an Apple that hath a skin fair, but a rotten coar; many appear Righteous, who are only Righteous in appearance.

And if so, then a man may profess Religion, and yet be but almost a Christian.

3. Custom and Fashion may create a man a Professor; as you have many that wear this or that garbe, not because it keeps them warmer, or hath any excellency in it, more than another, but meerly for fashion.

Many must have powdred hair, spotted faces, Feathers in their Caps, &c. for no other end, but because they would be fools in fashion.

So many profess Christianity, not because the means of grace warms the heart, or that they see any excellency in the ways of God above the World, but

or, but meerly to follow the fashion; I wish I might not say, it hath been true of our days, because Religion hath been uppermost, therefore many have professed it; it hath been the gaining Trade, and then most will be of that Trade.

Religion in credit makes many Professors, but few Profelites; but when Religion suffers, then its Confessors are no more than its Converts; for custom makes the former, but conscience the latter.

He that is a Professor of Religion meerly for custom-sake, when it prospers, will never be a Martyr for Christ's sake when Religion suffers.

He that owns the truth to live upon that, will disown it when it comes to live upon him.

They say, that when a house is decaying and falling, all the Rats and Mice will forsake it: while the house is firm, and they may shelter in the roof, they'll stay, but no longer; lest in the decay, the fall should be upon them, and they that lived at top, should lie at bottom.

My Brethren, may I not say, we have

have many that are the Vermine, the Rats and Mice of Religion, that would live under the roof of it, while they might have shelter in it; but when it suffers, forsake it lest it should fall, and the fall should be upon them; I am perswaded this is not the least reason why God hath brought the wheel upon the profession of Religion, viz. to rid it of the Virmine.

He shakes the Foundation of the House, that these Rats and Mice may quit the roof; not to overturn it, but to rid them out of it; as the Husbandman fans the Wheat, that he may get rid of the Chaff. The Halcion-days of the Gospel provoke hypocrisie, but the sufferings for Religion prove sincerity.

Now then if custom and fashion make many men professors, then a man may profess Religion, *and yet be but almost a Christian,*

4. If many may perish under a profession of godliness, then a man may profess Religion, *and yet be but almost a Christian.*

Now the Scripture is clear, that a man may perish under the highest profession

The false Professor cryed and cast:

profession of Religion. Christ cursed the Fig-tree that had leaves and no fruit. It is said, *Mat. 8. 12.* that the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness. Who were these, but they that were then the only people of God in the World by profession, that had *Psal. 50. 5.* made a Covenant with him by sacrifice? and yet these cast out.

In *Mat. 7. 22.* You read of some that came and made boast of their profession to Christ, hoping that might save them; Lord (say they) *Mat. 7. 22.* have we not prophesied in thy name, cast out Devils in thy name, done many wonderful works in thy name?

Now what saith our Lord Christ to this? *Then I will profess unto them, Verse 23.* I never knew you, depart from me.

Mark, here are them that prophesie in his name, and yet perish in his wrath; in his name cast out Devils, and then are cast out themselves; in his name do many wonderful works, and yet perish for wicked workers.

The profession of Religion will no more keep a man from perishing, than calling a Ship the *Safeguard*, or the *Good-speed*, will keep her from drowning.

D

As

As many go to heaven with the fear of hell in their hearts, so many go to hell with the name of Christ in their mouths. Now then, if many may perish under a profession of Godliness, then may a man be a high professor of Religion, and yet be but *almost a Christian*.

Object.

Mat. 10. 23

But is it not said by the Lord Christ himself, *He that confesses me before men, him will I confess before my Father in Heaven.*

Now for Christ to say, he will confess us before the Father, is equivalent to a promise of eternal life; for if Jesus Christ confesses us, God the Father will never disown us.

True, they that confess Christ, shall be confessed by him; and it is as true, that this confession is equivalent to a promise of Salvation. But now you must know, that professing Christ, is not confessing him; for to profess Christ is one thing, to confess Christ is another; confession is a living testimony for Christ, in a time when Religion suffers; profession may be only a lifeless formality, in a time when Religion prospers. To confess Christ, is to chuse his ways, and own them, to pro-

profess Christ, is to plead for his ways, and yet live besides them. Profession may be from a feigned love to the ways of Christ, but confession is from a rooted love to the person of Christ.

To profess Christ, is to own him, when none deny him; to confess Christ, is to plead for him, and suffer for him, when others oppose him; hypocrites may be professors, but the Martyrs are the true confessors; Profession is a *swimming* down the stream, Confession is a swimming against the stream. Now many may swim with the stream (like the dead fish,) that cannot swim against the stream with the living fish; many may profess Christ, that can't confess Christ; and so notwithstanding their profession, yet are but *almost Christians*.

4. To come yet nearen; *A man may go far in opposing his sin, and yet be but almost a Christian.* How far a man may go in this work, I shall shew you in seven Gradual instances.

First, *A man may be convinced of sin, and yet be but almost a Christian.* For, 1. Conviction may be rational as well as spiritual; it may be from a na-

The Almost Christian distressed,
 tural conscience enlightened by the Word, without the effectual work of the Spirit, applying sin to the heart.

2. Convictions may be worn out; they many times go off, and end not in sound Conversion, saith the Church,
 Isa. 26. 18. *We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have brought forth wind. This is the complaint of the Church, in reference to the unprofitableness of their afflictions; and it may be the complaint of most in reference to the unprofitableness of their convictions.*

3. Many take convictions of sin, to be conversion from sin, and so sit down and rest in their convictions. That is a sad complaint God makes of Ephraim,
 Hos. 13. 13 *ims, Ephraim is an unwise Son, for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of Children. Now then, if convictions may be only from natural conscience, if they may be worn out, or may be mistaken and rested in for conversion, then a man may have convictions, and be but almost a Christian.*
 Secondly, *A man may mourn for sin, and yet be but almost a Christian; so did Saul, so did Esau, for the loss of his birth-right, which was his sin; and there-*

Heb. 12.
 16, 17.

therefore he is called by the spirit of God, *Prophane Esau*; yet he sought it again carefully with tears.

But doth not Christ pronounce them blessed that mourn? *Mat. 5. 4. Blessed are they that mourn.*

Sure then if a man mourn for sin, he is in a good condition: you see saith *Nazianzen*, *ἡ ἐν τῇ ἐννοίᾳ τῆς ἐννοίας*, that salvation is joynd with sorrow.

I answer, it is true, that they who mourn for sin in the sense Christ there speaks of, are blessed; but all mourning for sin, doth not therefore render us blessed.

1. True mourning for sin, must flow from spiritual convictions of the evil, & vileness, and damnable nature of sin.

Now all that mourn for sin, don't do it from a through-work of spiritual conviction upon the soul; they have not a right sense of the evil and vileness of sin.

2. True mourning for sin, is more for the evil that is in sin, than the evil that comes by sin, more because it dishonours God, and wounds Christ, and grieves the Spirit, and makes the

The almost Christian discovered, or,
soul unlike God, than because it damns
the soul.

Mat. 8. 12.

Now there are many that mourn
for sin, not so much for the evil that
is in it, as for the evil that it brings
with it; there is mourning for sin in
Hell; you read of *weeping and wailing*
there. The damned are weeping and
mourning to eternity; there is all sor-
row, and no comfort; as in Heaven
there is peace without trouble, joy
without mourning, so in Hell there
is trouble without peace, mourning
without joy, weeping and wailing in-
cessantly; but it is for the evil they
feel by sin, and not for the evil that is
in sin. So that a man may mourn for
sin, and yet be but *almost a Christian*:
it may grieve him to think of perish-
ing for sin, when it doth not grieve
him that he is defiled and polluted by
sin.

Thirdly; *A man may make large con-
fession of sin, to God, to others, and yet be
but almost a Christian.*

Sam. 24.

25. & 26.

How ingenuously doth Saul confess
his sin to David, *I have sinned* (saith he)
thou art more righteous than I. Behold
I have played the fool, and have erred
exceedingly. So

The false Professor cries and saith.

So Judas makes a full confession, *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.* Mar. 27. 4.

Yet Saul and Judas were both rejected of God; so that a man may confess sin, & yet be but *almost a Christian.*

Object.

But is not confession of sin, a character of a Child of God? Doth not the Apostle say, *If we confess our sins, God is just and faithful to forgive them:* No man was ever kept out of Heaven for his confessed badness, though many are kept out of Heaven for their supposed goodness.

1 Joh. 1. 9.

Peccato-

rum con-

fessio Syrec-

doche uni-

versam pe-

nitentiam

hoc loco

significat,

Vorst. in

loc.

Judah, in Hebrew, signifies *confession*; now *Judah* got the Kingdom from *Reuben*; confession of sin is the way to the Kingdom of Heaven.

There are some that confess sin, and are saved; there are others that confess sin, and perish.

1. Many confess sin meely out of custom, and not out of conscience; you shall have many that will never pray, but they will make a long confession of sin, and yet never feel the weight or burden of it upon their consciences.

2. Many will confess lesser sins, and yet conceal greater; like the Patient

in *Plamarch* that complained to his Physician of his finger, when his Liver was rotten.

3. Many will confess sin in the general, or confess themselves Sinners; and yet see little, and say less of their particular sins; an implicate confession (as one saith) is almost as bad as an implicate saith.

Where confession is right, it will be distinct, especially of those sins that were our chief sins.

Psal. 51.

4. 14.

1 Tim. 1.

23, 15.

So *David* confesses his blood-guiltiness and adultery; So *Paul* his blasphemy, persecution, and injury against the Saints. It is bad to hear men confess they are great Sinners, and yet can't confess their sins.

Though the least sin be too bad to be committed, yet there is no sin too bad to be confessed.

4. Many will confess sin, but it is only under extremity, that is not free and voluntary. *Pharaoh* confesses his sin, but it was when Judgment compelled him.

Exod. 10.

16.

I have sinned against the Lord, saith he, but it was when he had eight Plagues upon him.

Many

The false Professor tryed and cast.

Many do by their sins, as Mariners do by their goods, cast them out in a storm, wishing for them again in a calm. Confession should come like water out of a spring, which runs freely, not like water out of a Still, which is forced by fire.

5. Many confess their sins, but with no intent to forsake sin; they confess the sins they have committed, but don't leave the sins they have confessed.

Many men use confession as Lewis the Eleventh of France did his Crucifix; he would swear an Oath, and then kiss it; and swear again, and then kiss it again.

So many sin, and then confess they do not well, but yet never strive to do better.

Mr. Taxhel tells a story of a Minister he knew, that would be often drunk, and when he came into the Pulpit, would confess it very lamentingly; and yet no sooner was he out of the Pulpit, but he would be drunk again, and this would he do as constantly as men follow their Trades.

Now then, if a man may confess sin merely out of custom; if he may

D 5.

confess

The almost Christian discovered, or, confess lesser sins, and yet conceal greater; if he may confess sin only in the general, or only under extremity, or if he may confess sin without any intent to forsake sin, then surely a man may confess sin, and yet be but almost a Christian.

Fourthly, A man may forsake sin, and yet be but almost a Christian, he may leave his lust and his wicked ways, which he sometimes lived in; and in the Judgment of the World become a new man, and yet not be a new creature. Simon Magus, when he hears Philip preaching concerning the Kingdom of God, leaves his sorcery and witchcraft, and believes.

Objct. But you'll say, this seems contrary to Scripture, for that says, He that confesseth, and forsaketh sin, shall have mercy: But I confess sin, yea, not only so; but also I forsake sin; sure therefore his mercy is my portion, it belongs to me.

Sol. It is true, that where the soul forsakes sin from a right Principle, after a right manner, to a right end; where he forsakes sin as sin, as being contrary to God, and the purity of his nature.

This

The false Professor tried and cast.

11

This declares that soul to be right with God, and the promise shall be made good to it, *He shall find mercy.*

But now pray mind, there is a forsaking sin that is not right, but unsound.

1. Open sins may be deserted, and yet secret sins may be retained; now this is not a right forsaking; such a soul shall never find mercy. A man may be cured of a wound in his flesh, and yet may die of an imposthume in his bowels.

2. A man may forsake sin, but not as sin; for he that forsakes sin as sin, forsakes all sin; *A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia*: it is impossible for a man to forsake sin as sin, unless he forsakes all that he knows to be sin.

3. A man may let one sin go, to hold another the faster; as a man that goes to Sea, would willingly save all his goods; but if the storm arises that he cannot, then he throws some overboard to lighten the Vessel, and save the rest. So did they, *Act. 27. 38.*

So the Sinner chooses to keep all his sins, but if a storm arises in his conscience, why then he will heave one lust over-

The almost Christian discovered, or,
over-board to save the life of another.

4. A man may let all sin go, and yet be a Sinner still; for there is the root of all sin in the heart, though the fruit be not seen in the life; the tree lives, though the Boughs be lopt off.

As a man is a Sinner before ever he acts sin, so (till grace renew him) he is a Sinner; though he leaves sin; for there is original sin in him enough to damn and destroy him.

5. Sin may be left, and yet be loved; a man may forsake the life of sin, and yet retain the love of sin; now though leaving sin makes him almost a Christian, yet loving sin shews he is but almost a Christian.

It is a less evil to do sin, and not love it, than to love sin and not do it; for to do sin may argue only weakness of grace, but to love sin argues strength of lust. *What I hate, that I do, Rom. 7. 15.*

Sin is bad in any part of man; but sin in the affection is worse than sin in the Conversation; for sin in the Conversation may be only from infirmity, but sin in the affection is the fruit of choice and unregeneracy.

6. All sin may be chained, and yet the

The false Professor tryed and cast.

the heart not changed, and so the nature of the sinner is the same as ever.

A dog chained up, is a dog still, as much as if he was let loose to devour.

There may be a cessation of arms between enemies, and yet the quarrel may remain on foot still; there may be a making truce, where there is no making peace.

A sinner may lay the weapons of sin out of his hand, and yet the enmity against God still remain in his heart.

There may be a truce, he may not sin against him, but there can be no peace till he be united unto him.

Restraining grace holds in the Sinner, but it is renewing grace that changes the Nature. Now many are held in by grace from being open Sinners, that are not renewed by grace, and made true Believers.

Now then, if a man may forsake open sins, and retain secret sins; if he may forsake sin, but not as sin; if he may let one sin go, to hold another the faster; if a man may let all sin go, and yet be a sinner still; if sin may be left, and yet be loved: Finally, if all sin may be chained, and yet the heart not changed.

changed, then a man may forsake sin, and yet be but *almost a Christian*

2 Sam. 13.
22, 28.

Fifthly, *A man may hate sin and yet be but almost a Christian. Absalom hated Ammons uncleanness with his Sister Thamar, yea, his hatred was so great, as that he slew him for it, and yet Absalom was but a wicked man.*

Object.

But the Scripture makes it a sign of a gracious heart to hate sin; yea, though a man do through infirmity fall into sin, yet if he hates it, this is a proof of grace. *Paul* proves the sincerity of his heart, and the truth of his grace, by this hatred of sin, though he committed it, *Rom. 7. 15. What I hate, that do I.*

Nay, what is grace; but *conformitas cum archetypo*, a conformity of the soul to God, to love as God loves, to hate as God hates: now God hates sin; it is one part of his holiness, to hate all sin.

Sol. And if I hate sin, then am I conformed to God; and if I am conformed to God, then am I altogether a Christian.

It is true, that there is a hatred of sin, which is a sign of grace, and which flows from a principle of grace; and is grace; As for Instance. To

To hate sin, as it is an offence to God, a wrong to his Majesty; to hate sin, as it is a breach of the command, and so a wicked controuling Gods Will, which is the only rule of goodness; to hate sin, as being a disingenuous transgression of that Law of Love established in the blood and death of Christ, and so in a degree a *crucifying of Christ afresh.*

To hate sin as being a grieving and quenching the Spirit of God, as all sin in its nature is.

Thus to hate sin is Grace; and thus every true Christian hates sin.

But though every man that hath grace, hates sin; yet every man that hates sin, hath not grace: For

A man may hate sin from other principles, not as it is a wrong to God, or a wounding *Christ*, or a grieving the Spirit, for then he would hate all sin, for there is no sin but hath this in the nature of it: But

1. A man may hate sin for the shame that attends it, more than for the evil that is in it. Some sinners there are who declare *their sin as Sodom, and hide it not.* They are set down in the

the seat of they scornful, the glory in their
 Psal. 1. 1. shame, Phil. 3. 19. But now others there
 are who are ashamed of sin, and there-
 fore hate it, not for the sins sake, but
 the shames sake. This made *Absalom*
 hate *Ammons* uncleanness, because it
 brought shame upon him and his
 Sister.

2. A man may hate sin more in
 others than in himself; so doth the
 Drunkard, he hates Drunkenness in
 another, and yet practises it himself:
 the lyar hates falshood in another, but
 likes it in himself. Now he that hates
 sin from a Principle of grace, hates sin
 most in himself; he hates sin in others,
 but he leaths most the sins of his own
 heart.

3. A man may hate one sin, as be-
 ing contrary to another. There is a
 great contrariety between sin and sin,
 between lust and lust; it is the excel-
 lency of the life of grace, that it is a
 uniform life; there is no one grace
 contrary to another; the graces of
 Gods Spirit are different, but not dis-
 serring, faith, and love, and holiness are
 all one; they consist together at the
 same time, in the same subject; say
 they

they can't be parted; there can be no faith without love, no love without holiness; and so on the other hand, no holiness without love, no love without faith. So that this makes the life of grace an easie and excellent life; but now the life of sin is a distracting, contradictionous life, wherein a man is a Tit. 3. 3. servant to contrary lusts; the lust of Pride and prodigality, is contrary to the lust of covetousness, &c.

Now when one lust gets to be the Master-lust in the soul, then that works a hatred of its contrary; where covetousness gets the heart, there the heart hates pride; and where pride gets uppermost in the heart, there the heart hates covetousness. Thus a man may hate sin, not from a Principle of grace, but from the contrariety of lust.

He don't hate any sin as it is sin, but he hates it as being contrary to his beloved sin.

Now then if a man may hate sin for the shame that attends it; if he may hate sin more in others, than in himself; and if he may hate one sin as being contrary to another, then he may hate sin, and yet be but *Almost a Christian*.
Sixth.

Sixthly, *A man may make great vows and promises, he may have strong purposes and resolutions against sin, and yet be but almost a Christian.*

This did Saul, he promises and resolves against his sin, *Return my Son David; saith he, for I will no more do thee harm.* What promises and resolves did Pharaoh make against that sin of detaining Gods people? Saith he, *I will let the people go, that they may do Sacrifice to the Lord: And again, I will let ye go, and ye shall stay no longer,* *Exod. 9. 28.* And yet Saul and Pharaoh both perished in their sins: the greatest purposes and promises against sin, will not make a man a Christian: For,

1. Purposes and Promises against sin, never hurt sin; we say, *threatned folk live long;* and truly so do threatned sins. It is not new purposes, but a new nature; that must help us against sin; purposes may bring to the birth; but without a new nature, *there is no strength to bring forth.* The new nature is the best soil for holy purposes to grow in; otherwise they wither and die, like plants in an improper soil.

2. Troubles

2. Troubles and afflictions may provoke us to large purposes and promises against sin for the future; what more common than to vow, and not to pay; to make vows in the day of trouble, which we make no Conscience to pay in the day of peace? Many covenant against sin, when trouble is upon them; and then sin against their covenant, when it is removed from them.

It was a brave rule that *Pliny* in one of his Epistles gave his friend to live by *Ut tales esse perseverimus sani, quales nos futuros esse profitemur infirmi*; That we should continue to be such when we are well, as we promise to be when we are sick.

Many are our sick-bed promises, but we are no sooner well, but we grow sick of our promises.

3. Purposes and Resolves against sin for the future, may be only a temptation to put off Repentance for the present; Satan may put a man on to good purposes, to keep him from present attempts.

He knows whatever we purpose, yet the strength of performance is not in our selves.

He

He knows that purposes for the future, are a putting God off for the present; they are a secret will not, to a present opportunity. That is a notable passage, *Luk. 9. 59. Follow me*, saith Christ to the two men; Now see what answers they give to Christ, *Suffer me first to go and bury my Father*, says one. This man purposes to follow Christ, only he would stay to bury his Father. Says the other, *Lord, I will follow thee, but let me first go and bid them farewell which are at my house*, vers. 61. I will follow thee, but only I would first go and take my leave of my friends, or see my house in order; and yet we do not find that ever they followed Christ, notwithstanding their fair purposes.

4. Nature unsanctified may be so far wrought on, as to make great promises and purposes against sin.

1. A natural man may have great convictions of sin, from the workings of an enlightened conscience.

2. He may approve of the Law of God.

3. He may have a desire to be saved. Now these three together; The workings of conscience; The sight of

the goodness of the Law; A desire to be saved, may bring forth in a man great purposes against sin, and yet he may have no heart to perform his own purposes. This was much what the case of them, *Deut. 5.* say they to *Moses, vers. 27.* Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and tell thou it to us, and we will hear it, and do it.

This is a fair promise, and so God takes it, *v. 28.* I have heard the words of this people, they have well said all that they have spoken. So said, and so done, had been well, but it was better said than done; for though they had a tongue to promise, yet they had no heart to perform; and this God saw, therefore said he, *v. 29.* O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always, that it might be well with them!

They promise to fear God and keep his Commandment, but they wanted a new heart to perform what an un-sanctified heart had promised. It fares with men in this case, as it did with that Son in the Gospel, that said, *He would*

Mat. 21. *would go into the vineyard, but went not.*
30.

Now then if purposes and promises against sin, never hurt sin; if present afflictions may draw out large promises, if they may be the fruit of a temptation, or if from nature unsanctified; surely then a man may promise and purpose much against sin; and yet be but almost a Christian.

Seventhly *A man may maintain a strife and combat against sin in himself, and yet be but almost a Christian.* So did Balaam, when he went to curse the people of God, he had a great strife within himself; *How shall I curse* (saith he) *where God hath not cursed?* Or *how shall I despise, whom the Lord hath not despised?*

Num. 23. 8.

And did not Pilate strive against his sin, when he said to the Jews, *shall I crucifie your King? What evil hath he done?* I am innocent of the blood of this just man.

Mark 15. 12, 14.

Mat. 27. 24.

Object. But you will say, *Is not this an argument of grace, when there is a striving in the soul against sin? for what should oppose sin in the heart, but grace?* The

Gal. 5. 17. Apostle makes the lusting of the flesh against the spirit, and the spirit against

the flesh, to be an argument of grace in the heart. Now I find this strife in my heart; though the remainders of corruption sometimes break out into actual sins, yet I find a striving in my soul against sin.

It is true, there is a striving against sin which is only from grace, and is proper to believers; and there is a striving against sin, which is not from grace, and therefore may be in them that are not believers. Sol.

There is a strife against sin in one and the same faculty, the will against the will; the affection against the affection, and this is that which the Apostle calls *the lusting of the flesh against the spirit*; that is the striving of the unregenerate part against the regenerate, and this is ever in the faculty, and is proper to believers only.

An unbeliever never finds this strife in himself, this strife cannot be in him, it is impossible (as such) that is, while he is on this side a state of Grace.

But then there is a striving against sin in divers faculties, and this is the strife that is in them that are not believers; there the strife is between the will

*Vide meli-
ora prolo-
que Deteri-
ora sequer.*

will and the conscience; Conscience enlightned and terrified with the fear of hell and damnation, that is against sin; the will and affection (not being renewed) they are for sin. And this causes great tuggings and strong combates many times in the Sinners heart.

Thus it was with the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; Conscience convinced them of the Divinity of Christ, and of the truth of his being the Son of God; and yet a perverse will, and carnal affections, cry out, *Crucifie him, Crucifie him.*

Conscience pleaded for him, he had a witness in their bosoms, and yet their wills were bent against him, and therefore they are said *to have resisted the Spirit*; viz. the workings and convictions of the Spirit in their Consciences, *Act. 7. 51.* And this is the case of many sinners; when will and affections are for sin, and plead for it, conscience is against it, and many times frights the soul from the doing of it.

And hence men take that which opposes sin in them, to be grace, when it is only the work of a natural Conscience; they conclude the strife is between Grace and Sin, the regenerate, and

and unregenerate part, when alas it is no other, than the contention of a natural conscience against a corrupt will and affections.

And if so, then a man may have great strifes & combates against sin in him; and yet be but *almost a Christian*.

5. *A man may desire grace, and yet be but almost a Christian*; so did the five foolish Virgins, Mat. 25. 8. Give us of your Oyl; what was that but true grace? it was that Oyl that lighted the wise Virgins into the Bridegrooms Chamber.

They do not only desire to enter in, but they desire Oyl to light them in; wicked men may desire Heaven, desire a Christ to save them; there is none so wicked upon Earth but desire to be happy in Heaven.

But now here are they that desire grace as well as glory, and yet these are but *almost Christians*.

But is it not commonly taught, that *Object*. desires of grace are grace? nay, doth not our Lord Christ himself make it so? *Blessed are they that hunger & thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* Mat. 5. 6.

It is true, that there are some de-

E

Sol.
sires

fires of grace, which are grace: As,

1. When a man desires grace from a right sense of his natural state, when he sees the vileness of Sin, and the woful, defiled, and loathsome condition he is in by reason of sin, and therefore desires the grace of Christ to renew and change him; this is grace. This some make to be the lowest degree of saving faith.

2. When a man joyns proportionable endeavours to his desires; doth not only wish for grace, but work for Grace, such desires are grace.

3. When a mans desires are constant and uncessant, that cease not but in the attainment of their object; such desires are true grace. They are a part of the especial work of the Spirit. They do really partake of the nature of Grace; now it is a known Maxim.

Quicquid participat de natura totius, est pars totius: that which partakes of the nature of the whole, is a part of the whole, the filings of Gold, are Gold. The Sea is not more really water, than the least drop; the flame is not more really fire, than the least spark; for these do *participare de natura totius.*

But

But though all true desires of grace, are grace; yet all desires of grace are not true: For,

1. A man may desire grace, but not for it self, but for somewhat else; not grace for graces sake, but for heavens sake; He don't desire grace, that his nature may be changed, his heart renewed, the imager of God stampt upon him, and his lusts subdued in him.

2. These are blessed desires found only in true Believers. The true Christian only can desire grace for graces sake; but the Almost-Christian may desire grace for Heavens sake.

3. A man may desire grace without proportionable endeavours; he after grace; many are good at wishing, bad at working: Like him that lay in the grass on a Summers day, crying out, *O si esset laborare*; *O that it were to work!*

Solomon saith, *The desire of the slothful kills him*: How so? For his hands refuse to labour, Prov. 21. 25. He perishes in his desires.

The Believer joyns desires and endeavours together; *One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after*, Psal. 27. 4.

Virtutem expetant contabescunt

*Impii non
curant
querere
quem ta-
men desi-
derant in-
venire cu-
pientes
consequi
sed non
Ber. 8. 5.*

*Sero sapi-
unt Phri-
ges.*

3. A mans desires of grace may be unseasonable; thus the foolish Virgins desired oyl when it was too late.

The believers desires are seasonable; he desires grace in the season of grace, and seeks in a time when it may be found. *The wise mans heart knows both time and Judgment.* He knows his season, and hath wisdom to improve it.

The silly Sinner doth all his works out of season; he sins away the seasons of grace, and then desires grace when the season is over; the Sinner doth all too late, as Esau desired the blessing when it was too late, and therefore he lost it; whereas, had he come sooner, he had obtained it.

Most men are like *Ephraim*, wise too late, they come when the Market is done; when God hath shut in shop; then they have their oyl to get.

When they lie upon their death-beds then they desire holy hearts.

4. Desire of grace in many are very unconstant and fleeting, like the morning dew that quickly passes away.

Or like *Jonahs Gourd* that springs up in a night, and withers in a night; they have no root in the heart, and there-

fore

The false Professor tryed and cast.

77

fore quickly perish: Now then, if a man may desire grace, but not for graces sake, if desires may be without endeavours; if a man may desire grace when 'tis too late; if these desires may be but fleeting and inconstant, then may a man desire grace, and yet be but almost a Christian.

6. A man may tremble at the Word of God and yet be but almost a Christian, as Belsazzar did at the hand-writing Dan. 5. 6. upon the wall.

But is not that a note of Sincerity Obj. and truth of grace, to tremble at the Word? doth not God say, *Thy him will* Isa. 66. 2. *I look, that is of a poor and contrite Spirit, and trembles at my Word?*

There is a two-fold trembling.

1. One is, when the word discovers the guilt of Sin, and the wrath of God that belongs to that guilt; this where conscience is awake, causes trembling and amazement; thus when Paul Preached of righteousness and Judgment, it is said *Felix trembled.* Acts 24. 25.

2. There is a trembling which arises from a holy dread and reverence of the Majesty of God, speaking in his Word; this is only found in true Believers,

The almost Christian discovered, or, T
hevers, and is that which keeps the
soul low in its own eyes. Therefore
mark how the words run in Isa. 66.2.
To him will I look that is of a poor and
coherical spirit, and trembles at my Word.

God don't make the promise to him
 that trembles at the Word for the De-
 vils believe and tremble; the Word of
 Jam. 2. 19. God can make the proudest, stoutest
 sinner in the world to shake and trem-
 ble, but it is to the poor & contrite spirit
 that trembles: Where trembling is the
 fruit of a spirit broken for sin, and low
 in its own eyes, there will God look.

Now many tremble at the Word,
 but not from poverty of spirit; not
 from a heart broken for sin; and low
 in its own eyes; not from a sense of
 the Majesty and holiness of God; and
 therefore notwithstanding they trem-
 ble at the word, yet they are but al-
 most Christians.

4. A man may delight in the Word and
 Ordinances of God, and yet be but almost
 a Christian: Isa. 58. 2. They take delight
 in approaching to God.

And it is said of that ground, Mat.
 23. 26. that it received the Word with
 joy, and yet it was but stony ground.

But

But it is not made a character of a *Object*. godly man, to delight in the word of God; doth not *David* say, *He is a* Psal. 1. 2. *blessed man that delights in the Law of the Word?*

There is a delighting in the Word, Sol. which flows from grace, and is a proof of blessedness.

1. He that delights in the word because of its spirituality, he is a Christian indeed; the more spiritual the Ordinances are, the more doth a gracious heart delight in them.

2. When the Word comes close to the conscience, rips up the heart, & discovers sin, & yet the soul delights in it notwithstanding, this is a sign of grace.

3. When delight arises from that communion that is to be had with God there; this is from a principle of grace in the soul.

But there may be a delight in the Word, where there is no Grace.

1. There are many delight in the Word; because of the Eloquence of the Preacher; they delight not so much in the truths delivered, as in the dress they are delivered in. Thus it is said of the Prophet *Ezekiel*, that he
Ezek. 33.
32.
was.

20 The almost Christian discovered, or,
Ezek. 33. was to them as a very *pleasant* song of
32. *one that hath a pleasant voice.*

2. There are very many delight to
hear the word, that yet take no de-
light to do it; so saith God of them,
Ezek. 33. 22. *They delight to hear my*
22. *words, but they do them not.*

Now then, if a man may delight in
the word, more because of the Elo-
quence of the Preacher, than because
of the spiritualness of the matter; if
he may delight to hear the Word, and
yet not delight to do it; then he may
delight in the Word, and yet be but
almost a Christian.

8. *A man may be a Member of the*
Church of Christ, he may joyn himself
to the people of God, partake with them
in all Ordinances, and share of all Church
priviledges, and yet be but almost a Chri-
stian.

So the five foolish Virgins joyned
themselves to the wise, and walked
together.

Many may be Members of the
Church of Christ, and yet not members
of Christ the Head of the Church.

There was a mixed multitude came
up with the Church of Israel out of
Egypt

The false Professor tryed and cast.

Egypt, they joyned themselves to the Israelites, owned their God, lest their own Countrey, and yep in heart Egyptians notwithstanding.

All are not Israel, that are of Israel,
Rom. 9. 6.

The Church in all ages hath had unsound members; Cain had communion with Abel, Ishmael dwelt in the same house with Isaac, Judas was in fellowship with the Apostles, and so was Demas, with the rest of the Disciples.

There will be some Bran in the finest Meal; the Draw-net of the Gospel catches bad fish as well as good; the Tares and the Wheat grow together, and it will be so till the harvest.

God hath a Church where there are no members but such as are true members of Christ, but it is in Heaven; it is the Church of the First born; there Heb. 12. are no Hypocrites, nor rotten, unsound professors, none but the spirits of just men made perfect; all is pure wheat that God layeth up in that Garner; there Mat. 3. 12. the Chaff is separated to unquenchable fire.

But in the Church on earth, the

E 5

Wheat

Wheat and the Chaff lie in the same heap together; the Samaritans will be near of kin to the Jews when they are in prosperity, so while the Church of God flourisheth in the world, many will joyn to it; they will seem Jews, though they are Samaritans, and seem Saints, though yet they are no better than almost Christians.

9. *A man may have great hopes of Heaven, great hopes of being saved, and yet be but almost a Christian.*

Heb. 6. 19.

Indeed there is a hope of Heaven, which is the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, it never miscarries, and it is known by four properties.

First, It is a hope which purifies the heart, purges out sin, 1 Joh. 3. 3. *He that hath this hope purifies himself even as God is pure.* That soul that truly hopes to enjoy God, truly endeavours to be like God.

Secondly, It is a hope which fills the heart with gladness; *We rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.*

Rom. 8. 24.
Gal. 5. 20.

Thirdly, It is a hope that is founded upon the promise; as there can be no true faith without a promise, so, nor any true hope; faith applies the promise

mise, and hope expects the fulfilling the promise, faith relies upon the truth of it, and hope waits for the good of it, faith gives interest, hope expects livery and seisin.

Fourthly, It is a hope that is wrought by God himself in the Soul; who is therefore called, *The God of hope*, as Rom. 15. being the *Author* as well as the *Object* ^{13.} of hope. Now he that hath this hope shall never miscarry: This is a right hope; the hope of the true Believer, *Christ in you the hope of glory.*

But then, as there is a true and Col. 1. 27 sound hope, so there is a false and rotten hope, and this is much more common, as bastard pearls are more frequently worn than true pearls.

There is nothing more common than to see men big with groundless hopes of Heaven: As,

1. A man may have great hope that hath no grace; you read of the hope of hypocrites, *Jos 8. 13, 14.*

The performance of duties is a proof of their hope; the foolish Virgins would never have done what they did, had they thought they should have been shut out after all.

Many

Many professors would not be at such pains in duties as they are, if they did not hope for heaven. Hope is the great motive to action; despair cuts the sinews of all endeavours; that is one reason why the damned in hell cease acting toward an alteration of their state, because despair hath taken hold of them; if there were any hope in hell they would up and be doing there. So that there may be great hope where there is no grace; experience proves this, formal professors are men of no grace, but yet men of great hopes; nay, many times you shall find that none fear more about their eternal condition, than they that have most cause of hope; and none hope more, than they that have most cause of fear. As interest in God may sometimes be without hope, so hope in God may be without interest.

2. A man may hope in the mercy, and goodness, and power of God, without eying the promise, and this is the hope of most; God is full of mercy and goodness, and therefore willing to save; and he is infinite in power, and therefore able to save, why there-

the
I
for
or
for
cy,
ve
en
is
an
ha
by
an
pa
fa
h
y
h
o
i
n
J
l

therefore should I not rest on him?

Now it is presumption, and therefore sin, to hope in the mercy of God, otherwise than by eying the promise; for the promise is the channel of mercy, the pipe through which it is conveyed; all the blessedness the Saints enjoy in heaven, is no other than what is the fruit of the promise relied on, and hoped for here on earth. A man hath no warrant to hope in God, but by virtue of the promise.

3. A man may hope for Heaven, and yet not cleanse his heart, nor depart from his secret sins; that hope of salvation that is not accompanied with heart-purification, that is a vain hope.

4. A man may hope for heaven, and yet be doing the work of hell; he may hope for salvation, and yet be working out his own damnation, and so perish in his confidences. This is the case of many, *Male agendo sperant, & sperando pereunt*; like the Water-man, that looks one way, and rows another; many have their eyes on heaven, whose hearts are in the earth; they hope in God, but chuse him not for a portion; they hope in God, but do not love him.

The almost Christian discovered, or,
 him as the best good, and therefore
 are like to have no portion in him, nor
 good by him; but are like to perish
 without him, notwithstanding all their
 hopes, *Job 27. 8. What is the hope of*
the hypocrite, though he hath gained,
when God takes away his soul?

Now then, if a man may have great
 hope of heaven, that hath no grace;
 if he may hope in mercy, without
 cying the promise; if he may hope
 without heart-purifying; if he may
 hope for heaven, and yet do the work
 of hell; surely then a man may have
 great hopes of heaven, and yet be but
 almost a Christian.

10. *A man may be under great and*
visible changes, and these wrought by the
Ministry of the Word, and yet be but al-
most a Christian, as Herod was; it is said
Mat. 6. 20. when he heard John Baptist, he did ma-
ny things and heard him gladly. Saul
was under a great change when he
met the Lords Prophets, he turned
Prophet too.

Sam. 10. Nay, it is said, *v. 9. of that 1 Sam.*
10. that God gave him another heart.
 Now was not this a work of grace?
 and was not Saul here truly convert-

ed

The false Professor cried and said,

87

ed; one would think he was, but yet indeed he was not.

For though it is said, God gave him another heart, yet it is not said, that God gave him a new heart.

There is a great difference between **לב אחר** (*lebb acher*) another heart, **לב חדש** (*lebb chadash*) a new heart; God gave him another heart to fit him for a Ruler, but gave him not a new heart to make him a Believer; another heart may make another man; but it is a new heart, that makes a new man.

Again, *Simon Magus* is a great proof of this truth; he was under a great & visible change; of a Sorcerer he was turned to be a Believer, he left his witchcrafts and Soreeries, and imbraced the Gospel, was not this a great change?

If the Drunkard doth but leave his Drunkenness, the Swearer his Oaths, the Prophane person his Prophaneness, they think this is a gracious change, and their state is now good; alas, *Simon Magus* did not only leave his sins, but had a kind of conversion; for he believed, and was Baptized.

But is not that man that is changed, a true Christian? Act 8. 12
Object

Not

Not every change makes a man a Christian; indeed there is a change that whoever is under it, he is a true Christian.

2 Cor. 5.
17.

Act. 26.
18.

When a mans heart is so changed, as that it is renewed; when old things are done away, and all is become new; when the *new man*, the new creature is wrought in the soul; when a man is turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God; when the mind is enlightened, the will renewed, the affections made heavenly, then a man is a Christian indeed.

But now you must know, that every change is not this change: For,

1. There is a civil change, a moral change, as well as a spiritual and supernatural change.

Many men are changed in a moral sense, and one may say, they are become *new men*, but they are in heart and nature the same men still: They are not changed in a spiritual and supernatural sense, and therefore it cannot be said of them, they are become *new Creatures*.

Restraining grace may cause a moral change; but it is renewing grace that

that must cause a saving change. Now many are under restraining grace, and so changed morally, that are not under the power of renewing grace, and so changed savingly.

2. There is an outward change, as well as an inward change; the outward change is often without the inward, though the inward change is never without the outward. A mans heart cannot be sanctified, but it will influence the life; but a mans life may be reformed, and yet never affect or influence the heart.

3. A man may be converted from a course of Profaneness, to a form of godliness; from a filthy conversation, to a fair profession, and yet the heart the same, in one and the other. A rotten Post may be gilt without, and yet unsound within. *Hypocrita in verbis sanctus, in corde vanus; intus Nero, foris Calo. Audi, nemo melius, specta nemo pejor.*

It is common to have the outside of the Cup and platter made clean, and yet the inside foul and filthy.

Now then, if a man may be changed morally, and yet not spiritually, outwardly,

wardly, and yet not inwardly, from a course of profaneness, to a lifeless form of godliness, then a than may be under great and visible changes, and yet be no more than *almost a Christian*.

I do not speak this to discountenance any change, short of that that is spiritual; but to awaken you to seek after that change which is more than moral. It is good to be outwardly reformed, but it is better to be savingly renewed.

I know how natural it is for men to take up with any thing like a work of conversion, though it be not conversion, and resting in that, they eternally perish.

Beloved, let me tell you, there is no change, no conversion can stead your souls in the day of Judgment; on this side that saving work, which is wrought on the Soul by the Spirit of God, renewing you throughout; the sober man without this change, shall as surely go to hell, as the foolish drunkard.

1 Thes. 5.
23.

Morality and Civility may commend us to men, but not to God. They are of no value in the procurement of an eternal salvation.

A man may go far in an outward change, and yet not be one step nearer Heaven, than he that never was under any change; nay, he may be (in some sense) further off; as Christ saith, *The Scribes and Pharisees were further from Heaven*, with all their shew of godliness, than *Publicans and Harlots* in all their sin and uncleanness. Because resting in a false work, a partial change, we neglect to seek after a true and saving change. There is nothing more common than to mistake our state, and by overweening thoughts mis-judge our condition, and so perish in our own delusions.

The World is full of these foolish builders that lay the foundation of their hopes of eternal salvation upon the sand.

Now my Brethren, would you not mistake the way to Heaven, and perish in a delusion? would you not be found fools at last? for none are such fools as the spiritual fool, who is a fool in the great business of salvation. Would you not be fools for your souls, & for eternity? O then labour after, and pray for a thorough work of Conversion, beg of God that he would make a *saving change*

Mat. 21.
31.

Mat. 7. 26.

The almost Christian discovered; or,
change in your souls, that you may be all
together Christians; all other changes
below this sewing change, this re-
change, make us but almost Christians.

II. A man may be very zealous in the
matters of Religion, and yet be but almost
a Christian: Jehu did not only serve
God, and do what he commanded him,
but was very zealous in his service,
2 King. 10. 16. Come with me and see
my zeal for the Lord of Hosts; and yet
in all this Jehu was a very hypocrite.

2 Chron. 29. 2. Joash was a great reformer in Jeho-
dab's time; it is said, He did that which
was right in the eyes of the Lord, all the
days of Jehoiadab the Priest, but when
v. 17, 18. Jehoiadab died, Joash his zeal for God
died with him, and he becomes a very
wretch.

Object.

But the Apostle makes zeal to be a
note of sound Christianity, Gal. 4. 18.
It is good to be zealously affected in good
things; may it seem to be the non-such
qualification for obtaining eternal life,
The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth vio-
lence, and the violent take it by force.

Mat. 11.
12.

Sol.

It is true, there is a zeal which is
good, and which renders the soul
highly acceptable to God; a zeal that
never

never misses of Heaven and salvation.

Now (his is a zeal which is a celestial fire, the true temper and heat of all the affections to God and Christ; *qui non zelat, non amat*. It is a zeal wrought, and kindled in the soul by the Spirit of God, who first works it, and then sets it on work. It is a zeal that hath the Word of God for its guide, directing it in working, both in regard of its object and end, manner and measure. It is a zeal that checks sin, and forwards the heavenly life. It is a zeal that makes the glory of God its chief end, which swallows up all by ends; *The zeal of thy house hath raised me up.* *John 2, 17.*

But now all zeal is not this kind of zeal; there is a false zeal, as well as a true; every grace hath its counterfeit; as there is fire, which is true heavenly fire on the Altar; so there is strange fire; *Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire upon Gods Altar.* *Lev. 10, 1.*

There are several kinds of zeal, none of which are true and sound, but false and counterfeit. The instance in eight particulars.

First, *There is a blind zeal, a zeal without*

The almost Christian discovered, or,

without knowledg, *Rom. 10. 2. They have zeal (saith the Apostle) but not according to knowledg*; now as knowledg without zeal is fruitless, so zeal without knowledg is dangerous, it is like Wild-fire in the hand of a fool, or like the Devil in the man possess'd, that threw him sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water; *Zelus absque scientia, quod vehementius irritus, et gravius corrumpit.* *Sed do alio modo*

Mat. 17. 15.

Bernard.

The eye is the light of the body, and the understanding is the light of the soul: now as the body without the light of the eye, cannot go without stumbling, so the soul without the light of the mind, cannot act without erring.

Zeal without knowledg, is like an ignis fatuus in a dark night, that leads a Traveller out of his way, as into the Bogs and mires. This was the zeal of Paul, while he was a Pharisee. *I was zealous towards God, & ye all are this day, and I persecuted this way with the death.* *And shouldst thou not weep & long with my self, I ought to have many things to say against the people of this Nazareth.* So *Phil. 3. 6. Concerning Zeal persecuting the Church.*

Acts 22.

26. 4.

Such

The false Professor tryed and cast.

92

Such a zeal was that in *Joh. 16. 2.*
They shall put you out of the Synagoge
(silence you, you shall not be suffered
to preach) *yea, the time comes, but who-*
ever kills you, will think that he doth God
service. This is great zeal, but yet it is
a blind zeal, and that God abhors.

Secondly, *There is a part 1. zeal;* in
one thing fire-hot, in another key-
cold; zealous in this thing, and yet
careless in another; many are first-
Table Christians, zealous in the duties
of the first Table, and yet neglect the
second: thus the *Pharisees* were zea-
lous in their *Corban**, and yet unnatu-
ral to their parents, suffering them
to starve and perish. Others are se-
cond-Table-Christians, zealous in the
duties of the second Table, but neglect
the first; more for righteousness a-
mong men, than for holiness towards
God. But now he whose Religion ends
with the first Table, or begins with
the second, he is a fool in his professi-
on, for he is but almost a Christian.

The woman that was for the divi-
ding the Child, was not the true Mo-
ther; and he that is for dividing the
10 commands, is not a true Believer.

John

* *Mat. 23.*

23.

Lyra hath

these very

words,

Filius per

professio-

nem sa-

lam in

religione

excusatur

subueni-

do preni-

biu.

96 *The almost Christian discovered, or,*

2 Kin. 10.
16. comp.
with ver.
29.

Jehu was zealous against *Abah* house, but not so against *Jerobaham* *Calves*; many are zealous against sin of opinion, that yet use no zeal against the sins of their conversation.

Jo. Fernel.
de Febri-
qu, L. 4.
C. 19.

Now as we know that the sweat of the whole body is a sign of health, but the sweat of some one part only shews a distemper, and therefore Physicians do reckon such a heat to be symptomatical.

So where zeal reaches to every Command of God alike, that is a sign of a sound constitution of Soul; but where it is partial, where a man is hot in one part and cold in another; that is symptomatical of some inward spiritual distemper.

Thirdly, *There is a mis-placed zeal* fixed upon unsuitable and disproportionate Objects; Many are very zealous in trifling things that are not worth it, and trifle in the things that most require it; like the *Pharisees* that were diligent Tythers of *Mint*, *Anise* and *Cummin*, but neglected the *weightier matters of the Law*, judgment, mercy, and faith. They had no zeal for their thought

Mat. 23.
23.

Thes. alse Professor cryed and cast.

though very hot for the other; many are more zealous for a Ceremony, than for the substance of Religion; more zealous for bowing at the name of Jesus, than for conformity to the life of Jesus; more zealous for a holy vestment than for a holy life: more zealous for the inventions of men, than for the institutions of Christ.

This is a superstitious zeal, and usually found in men unconverted; whom Grace never was wrought in. When was it that *Paul* was so exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his Fathers, as he saith *Gal. 1. 14.* but only when he was in his wretched and unconverted state? as you may see in the next verses; *But when it pleased God to call me by his grace, then I conferred not with flesh and blood.* *Paul* had another kind of zeal then, acted by other kind of principles.

Fourthly, *There is a selfish zeal,* that hath a man's own ends for its motive; *Jehu* was very zealous, but it was not so much for God, as for the Kingdom; not so much in obedience to the command, as in design to step into the Throne; and therefore

F God

Heathens will rise up in judgment against such men. *Deus non superstiti- one coli vult sed pietate,* said *Cicer.* *Gal. 1. 15. 16.*

God threatens to punish him for that very thing he commands him to do, *Hos. 1. 4. I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.* Because he shed that blood to gratifie his lust, not to obey God. So *Simeon* and *Levi* pretend great zeal for Circumcision, seem very zealous for the honour of God's Ordinances, when in truth their zeal was for Covetousness, and revenge upon the *Sechemites*.

Fifthly, *There is an out-side zeal*, such was that of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, they would not eat with unwashed hands, but yet would live in unseen sins; they would wash the Cup often, but the heart seldom; paint the outside, but neglect the inside. *Jehu* was a mighty outside-reformer, *2 King. 10. 16.* But he reformed nothing within in; for he had a base heart under all, *v. 31. Jehu took no heed to walk in the Law of the Lord with all his heart.* Though his fleece was fair, his Liver was rotten.

Our Lord Christ observes of the *Pharisees*, *They pray to be seen of men; and fast so, that they may may appear to men to fast* *Mat. 6. 5. 16.*

Sixthly, *There is a forinsick zeal*, that runs

runs out upon others, like the candle in the lanthorn, that sends all the heat out of the top, or as the lewd woman *Solomon* mentions, whose feet abide not in her own house. Pro. 7. 11

Many are hot and high against the sins of others, and yet cannot see the same in themselves; like the *Lamia*, that put on their spectacles when they went abroad, but pulled them off within doors.

It is easie to see faults in others, and as hard to see them in our selves. *Jehu* Tecum
bita. was zealous against *Baal* and his Priests, because that was *Ahabs* sin; but not against the Calves of *Beihel*, because that was his own sin. This zeal is the true character of an hypocrite; his own Garden is over-run with weeds, while he is busie in looking over his Neighbours Pale.

Seventhly, *There is a sinful zeal*; all the former may be called sinful from some defect; but this I call sinful in a more special notion, because against the life and chief of Religion; it is a zeal against zeal, that flies not at prophaness, but at the very power of godliness; not at error, but at truth,

and is most hot against the most spiritual & important truths of the times. Whence else are the sufferings of men for the truth, but from this spirit of zeal against the truth? This may be called a devilish zeal; for as there is the faith of Devils so there is the zeal of Devils; *therefore his rage is great, because he knows his time is short.*

im. 2. 19
ev. 12.

8. *There is a scriptureless zeal, that is not butted and bounded by the word, but by some base and low end; such was Sauls zeal, when God bids him destroy Amalek, and spare neither man nor beast; then contrary to Gods command, he spares the best of the sheep and Oxen, under pretence of zeal for Gods Sacrifice.*

Sam. 15.

Another time when he had no such command; then he slays the *Gibeonites in zeal to the Children of Israel and Judah.*

Sam. 21

Many a mans zeal is greater then and there, when and where he hath the least warrant from God.

The true spirit of zeal is bounded by Scripture; for it is for God, and the concernment of his glory: God hath no glory from that zeal that hath no Scripture warrant. Now

The false Professor tried and cast.

Now then, if the zeal of a man in the things of God; may be only a blind zeal, or a partial zeal, or a misplaced zeal, or a selfish zeal, or an outside zeal, or a forensick zeal, or a sinful zeal, or a Scriptureless zeal, then it is evident that a man may be very zealous in the matters of Religion, and yet be but *almost a Christian*.

12. *A man may be much in prayer, he Mat. 1 may pray often, and pray much, and yet 13. be but almost a Christian.*

So did the *Pharisees*, whom yet our Lord Christ rejects for *Hypocrites*.

But is not a praying-frame an argument of a sincere heart? are not the Saints of God called, *The generation of them that seek the face of God?* Psal. 24 6.

A man is not therefore a *Christian*, Sol. because he is much in prayer. I grant

That those prayers that are from the workings and sighings of Gods Spirit in us; from sincere hearts lifted up to God; from a sense of our own emptiness, and Gods infinite fulness; That are suited to Gods will, the great rule of prayer

The almost Christian discovered, or,
That are for spiritual things, more
than temporal.

That are accompanied with faith
and dependance: Such Prayers speak
a man *altogether a Christian*. But now
a man may be much in Prayer, and yet
be a stranger to such Prayer: As,

1. Nature may put a man upon
prayer, for it is a part of natural wor-
ship; it may put a child of God upon
prayer; so did Christ, *Mat. 26. 39, 42.*
He went and fell on his face and prayed,
saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let
this Cup pass from me. This was a pray-
er of Christ, which flowed from the
sinless strugglings of Nature, seeking its
own preservation.

2. A man may pray in pretence, for
a covering to some sin: so did those
devout *Pharisees*, *Mat. 23. 14.* *Wo to you*
Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye
devour widows houses, and for a pretence
make long prayers, therefore ye shall re-
ceive the greater damnation. So the *Pa-*
pists seem very devout to pray a rich
mans soul out of Purgatory, but it is
to cheat the Heir of much of his Estate,
under pretence of praying for his Fa-
thers soul.

The false Professer tryed and cast.

3. A man may pray, and yet love sin, as *Austin*, before *Conversion*, pray'd against his sin, but was afraid God should hear him, and take him at his word. Now God hears not such prayers, *Psal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my prayer.*

4. A man may pray much for temporal things, and little for spiritual things; and such are the prayers of most men, crying out most for temporal things: More for, *Who will shew us any good?* than for, *Lord, lift upon us the light of thy Countenance.* David copies out the prayer of such, *Psal.* 144. 12. &c. *That our sons may be as plants, and that our daughters may be as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a Palace: That our Garners may be full, &c.* Happy is the people that is in such a case. This is the carnal hearts prayer, and this *David* calls vanity, *v. 11.* *They are strange Children, whose mouth speaketh vanity.*

5. A man may pray, and yet be far from God in prayer. *This people draw nigh to me with their mouth, and honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me,* *Mat.* 15. 8. A man may pray,

28. The almost Christian discovered or,
and yet have no heart in prayer, and
Prov. 23. that God chiefly looks at; *My Son, give*
26. *me thy heart.*

The Jews have this sentence written upon the walls of their Synagogues, *Prayer without the intention of the mind, is but a body without a soul.*

It is not enough to be conscionable, to use prayer, but we must be conscionable to the use of Prayer. Many are so consciencious, that they dare not but pray; and yet so irreligious, that they have no heart in Prayer; a common work of God may make a man conscionable to do duties, but nothing less than saving grace in the heart will make a man conscionable in the doing of them.

Psal. 78. Some derive the Latin word, *to worship*, from the Greek *προσκύνησις* *to flatter*, and the English word *flatter*, from the Greek word *καταψύχω* *no ship* their tongues, for their hearts was not with him, ver. 36, 37.

● A mans Prayer may be a lie; as a profession without sanctity, is a lie to the world; so prayer without sincerity, is a lye to God. It is said of Israel, that they sought God, and enquired early after him; they were much in prayer, and God calls all but a lye. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lyed to him with their tongues, for their hearts was not with him, ver. 36, 37.

Hearken

The false Professor tryed and cast.

99

Hearken to my prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips, saith David, Psalm. 87.1.

7. Afflictions and the pressures of outward evils, will make a man pray, & pray much, *Psalm. 78.34. When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned, and enquired early after God.* The Heathen Mariners call every man upon his God when in a storm; when they fear drowning, then they fall to praying, *Jon. 1.5.* Mariners are for the most part none of the devoutest, nor much addicted to prayer; they will swear twice, where they pray once, & yet it is said, *They cry to the Lord in their trouble, Psalm. 107.23. 28.* and hence you have a Proverb, *He that cannot pray, let him go to Sea.*

*Nuper me-
amici cu-
jisdamlan-
guor ad-
monuit op-
timos esse
nos dum
infirmi su-
mus, Plin-
Ep. 26.17.
Quis nescit
orare, dis-
cat navi-
gare.*

They poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them, Isa. 26.6.

Now then, if nature may put a man upon prayer; if a man may pray in pretence and design; if a man may pray, and yet love sin; if a man may pray mostly for temporal things; if a man may pray, & yet be far from God in prayer; if prayer may be a lye; or it may be only the cry of the soul

F 5

un-

The almost Christian discovered, or,
under affliction; sure then a man may
be much in prayer, and yet be but *almost a Christian.*

Object.

But suppose a man pray and prevail
with God in prayer, surely that is a
witness from Heaven of mans sincerity
in prayer; now I pray and prevail; I
ask, and am answered.

Sol.

A man may pray and be answered,
for God many times answers prayers
in judgment; as God is sometimes
silent in mercy, so he speaks in wrath,
and as he sometimes denies prayer in
mercy, so he sometimes answers in
judgment; when men are over-impor-
tunate in some things their lusts are
upon, and will take no nay, then God
answers in judgment, *Psal. 78. 29.*
He gave them their own desire, They
had desired Quails, and God sends
them; but now mark the judgment,
verse 30. 31. While the meat was in
their mouths, the wrath of God came up-
on them, and slew them.

Object.

I, But suppose a mans affections are
much stirred in prayer, how then? is
not that a true note of Christianity?
Now my affections are much stirred in
prayer.

So

The false Professor tried and cast.

So was Esau's when he sought the blessing, *He sought it carefully with* Heb. 11. *tears.* A man may be affected with his ^{17.} own parts in a duty, while good notions pass through his head, and good words through his lips, some good motions also may stir in his heart, but they are but sparks which fly out at the Tunnel of the Chimney, which suddenly vanish; So that it is possible a man may pray, and prevail in prayer; pray and be affected in prayer, and yet be but *almost a Christian.*

13. *A man may suffer for Christ, in his goods, in his name, in his person, and yet be but almost a Christian.*

Every man that bears Christs Cross on his shoulders, doth not therefore bear Christs Image in his soul.

But doth not our Lord Christ make *Object* great promises to them that suffer, or lose any thing for him? doth not he say, *Mat. 19.29. Every one that hath* Mat. 19 *forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or* 29 *father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my Names sake, shall receive an hundredfold, & shall inherit everlasting life.* Sure they are true Christians whom Christ makes this promise to.

There-

The almost Christian discovered; or,

There is a suffering for Christ, that
Mat. 5. is a note of sincerity, and shall have its
10, 11, 12. reward.

That is, when a man suffers for a
good cause, upon a good call, and with
a good conscience, for Christs sake, and
in Christs strength: when his sufferings
Col. 1. 24. are a filling up, *that which is behind of*
the sufferings of Christ; when a man
suffers as a Christian, as the Apostle
hath it, 1. Pet. 4. 6. *If a man suffer as*
a Christian, let him not be ashamed; when
a man thrusts not himself into suffer-
ings, but stays Gods call, such suffer-
Mark 14. 28, 29. ing is a proof of integrity.

But now every suffering for Christ
is not suffering as a Christian: For,

1. A man may suffer for Christ, for
that profession of Religion that is up-
on him; the World hates the shew of
Religion; times may come, that it
may cost a man as dear to wear the
Livery of Christ, as to wear Christ him-
self. *Alexander* had like to have lost his
1 Tim. 1. life for the Gospel sake, Act. 19. 33.
19, 20. and 4. 14. yet he was that *Alexander* (as is ge-
nerally judged, that afterward made
Shipwreck of faith, and greatly opposed
Pauls Ministry.

The false Professor tried and cast.

2. A man may suffer for Christ, and yet have no true love to Christ. This is supposed in 1 Cor. 13. 3. *Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profits nothing.*

Love to Christ is the only Noble ground of suffering, but a man may suffer much upon other ends.

Out of opinion of meriting by our suffering, as the Papists: Or,

2. Out of vain glory, or for applause among professors; some have died that their names might live: Or,

Vicia amor patrie laudisque immensa

3. Out of a *Roman* resolution, or *cupido*, stoutness of spirit.

4. Out of a design of profit, as *Judas* forsook all for Christ, hoping to mend his Market by closing with him: Or,

5. Rather to maintain an opinion, than for truths propagation; *Socrates* died for maintaining that there was but one God; but whether he died rather for his own opinion, than for Gods sake, I think it is no hard matter to determine. Thus a man may suffer for professing Christ, and yet suffer upon wrong Principles.

Now then, if a man may suffer for Christ, from the profession that is upon him;

The almost Christian discovered; or,
him; or suffer for Christ, and yet not
truly love him; then a man may suffer
for Christ, and yet be but *almost a Christian*.

14. *A man may be called of God, and
embrace this call, and yet be but almost a
Christian.* Judas is a famous instance of
this truth, he was called by Christ him-
self, and came at the call of Christ, and
yet Judas was but *almost a Christian*.

Subject 7.

But is not the being under the call
of God, a proof of our interest in the
predestinating love of God? doth not
the Apostle say, *whom he predestinated,
them he called?* Rom. 8. 30. Nay, doth
he not say in the same verse, *Whom he
called, them he justified?* Nay, doth not
God call all whom he intends to save?

Mar. 20.

Though God calleth all those that
shall be saved, yet all shall not be sa-
ved whom God calleth; every man un-
der the Gospel is called of God in one
sense or other, but yet every man un-
der the Gospel, shall not therefore be
saved. *For many are called, but few are
chosen.*

6.

There is a two-fold Internal
call of God. External.

1. There is an internal call of God;
Now

The false Professor tryd and cast.

Now this call is a special work of the Spirit by the Ministry of the Word, whereby a man is brought out of a state of Nature, into a state of Grace; *out of darkness into light, from being vessels of wrath, to be made heirs of life.* Act. 26. 18.

I grant, that whoever is under this call of God, is called effectually and savingly, called to be a Christian indeed. *Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, comes to me.* Joh. 6. 45

2. There is a call of God which a man may have, and yet not be this call; there is an external call of God, which is by the Ministry of the word.

Now every man that lives under the preaching of the Gospel, is thus called; God calls every soul of you to repent and lay a sure foundation for Heaven and Salvation, by the word you hear this day. Mat. 22.

But now every man that is thus called, is not therefore a Christian: For,

1. Many under the call of God, come to Christ, but are not converted to Christ, have nothing of the grace and life of Christ, such as he, *Mat 22.* who when Christ sent out his servants to bid guests unto the Marriage, came in

206 *The almost Christian discovered, or,*
in at the call of Christ, but yet had not
on the wedding Garment, v. 11. that is,
had none of the grace and righteous-
ness of Jesus Christ.

2. Many that are under the call of
the Gospel, come to Christ, and yet
afterwards fell away from Christ; as
2 Tim. 4. Judas and Demas did; it is said when
10. Christ preached a Doctrine that his
Joh. 6. 66. Disciples did not like, that from that
time many of his Disciples went back
and walked no more with him.

Now then, if many are under this
external call of God only, if many that
come to Christ, are not converted to
Christ, but fall away from Christ; then
a man may be called of God, and yet
be but almost a Christian.

15. *A man may have the Spirit of
God, and yet be but almost a Christian.*
Balaam had the Spirit of God given
him when he blessed Israel, Numb.
24. 2. Balaam saw Israel abiding in
Tents, and the spirit of the Lord came
upon him. Judas had; for by the spi-
rit he cast out Devils, he was one of
them that came to Christ & said, Lord,
even the Devils are subject to us. Saul
had, 1 Sam. 10. 10. Behold a company of
Prophets

The false Professor tried

127

Prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

But you'l say, *Can a man have the Object. Spirit of God, and yet not be a Christian?* Indeed the Scripture saith, *If any man* Rom. 8.9. *have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,* but surely if any man have the spirit of Christ he is his.

There is a having the spirit, which Sol. is a sure mark of Saintship. Where the Spirit is an effectual prevailing principle of grace and sanctification, renewing and regenerating the heart: Where the spirit is as a potent worker Rom. 8. *helping the Souls infirmities:* where 26. the spirit is so as to *abide for ever.* But Joh. 14. 16. now every man that hath the spirit, hath not the spirit in this manner: For,

I. A man may have the spirit only transiently, not abidingly; the spirit may be in a man, and yet not dwell in a man; the spirit is where-ever he dwells; but he doth not dwell whereever he is; he is in all, but dwells in Saints only; he is in all *per divinitatis praesentiam*, but dwells in Saints only *per habitationis gratiam*: the Hypo-
Lamb. 1. sent. dist. 17.
crite

108 *The almost Christian discovered, or,*
crite may have the spirit for a season,
but not to abide in him for ever.

2. A man may *have the spirit*, and yet not be born of *the spirit*: every true Christian is born of *the spirit*: an Hypocrite may have the gifts of the spirit, but not the graces; the spirit may be in him by the way of *illumination*; but not by way of *sanctification*; by way of *conviction*, but not by way of *conversion*: though he may have much common *grace* for the good of others; yet he may have no special grace for the good of himself; though his profession be spiritual, yet is his state and condition carnal.

3. A man may have the spirit only as a spirit of bondage: Thus many have the spirit working only to bondage. *The spirit of bondage is an operation of the Holy Ghost by the Law, convincing the conscience of sin, and of the curse of the Law, and working in the soul such an apprehension of the wrath of God, as makes the thoughts of God a terror to him.*

This spirit may be, and often is without saving grace; This operation of the spirit was in Cain and Judas.

Though none that receive the spirit
of

The false Professor tried and cast

of *Adoption*, but they first receive the spirit of *bondage*; yet many receive the spirit of *bondage*, that never receive the spirit of *Adoption*.

4. A man may have the Spirit of God working in him, and yet it may be resisted by him: It is said of the *Jews*, *They rebelled and vexed his holy spirit*; and the same sin is charged upon their children, *Act. 7. 51, To stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.* The Hypocrite retains not the spirit so long, as to come up to Regeneration and Adoption, but quenches the motions of it, and thereby miscarries eternally.

5. A man may have the spirit, and yet sin that unpardonable sin: he may have the Holy Ghost, and yet sin the sin against the Holy Ghost; nay, no man can sin this sin against it, but he that hath some degree of it.

The true Believer hath so much of the spirit, such a work of it in him, that he cannot sin that sin: *He that is born of God sins not; to wit, that sin unto death*, for that is meant, *1 Job. 5. 16, 17, 18.* The carnal professed sinner, he cannot sin

110 *The almost Christian discovered, or,*
 sin that sin, because he is carnal and why?
 sensual, *having not the spirit.* A man He kn
 must have some measure of the spirit now
 that sins this sin; so hath the hypo- have
 Jude 19. crite; he is said to be partaker of the Moun
Holy Ghost, Heb. 6.4 and he only is ca- But
 pable of sinning the sin against the Ho- have
 ly Ghost. *Christ*

Now then, if a man may have the prom
 spirit transiently only, not abidingly; all th
 if a man may have the spirit, and yet that i
 not be born of the spirit; if he may ture,
 have the spirit only as a spirit of bon- Mark
 dage; if a man may have the spirit Th
 working in him, and yet it may be re- Christ
 sisted by him; if a man may have the be sav
 spirit, and yet sin that unpradonable believ
 sin against it; then surely a man may Simon
 have the spirit of God, and yet be but The I
 almost a Christian. none

Luk. 8.15. 16. *A man may have faith, and yet As*
be but almost a Christian; the stony All n
ground (that is, those hearers set out that
by the stony-ground) for a while be- who
lieved. It is said, John 2.23. That many faith
believed in the Name of Christ, yet Christ
durst not commit himself to them. You
Though they trusted in Christ, yet there
Christ would not trust them; and
why?

The false Professor tryed and sayd
why? *because he knew all men,* vers. 24.
He knew they were rotten at root;
notwithstanding their faith; a man may ¹ Cor. 13.
have all faith, to the removing of
Mountains, and yet be *nothing*.

But how can this be, that a man may *Object*.
have faith, and yet be but *almost a*
Christian? Doth not our Lord Christ
promise life eternal, and salvation, to
all that believe? Is not this the Gospel
that is to be preached to every crea-
ture, *He that believes, shall be saved?*
Mark 16. 16.

Though it is true what our Lord *Sol*.
Christ saith, that *he that believes shall*
be saved: yet it is as true, that many
believe that shall never be saved; for
Simon Magus believed; yea, *James* saith,
The Devils believe and tremble: Now Jam. 2. 19
none will say, these shall be saved.

As it is true, what the Apostle saith,
All men have not faith; so it is as true, ² Thes. 3.
that there are some men have faith,
who are no whit the better for their
faith.

You must know therefore } *Special and*
there is a two-fold faith, } *Saving.*
 } *Common &*
 } *not saving.*

1. There

The blind Christian discovered, or,

1. There is a saving faith.

Col. 2. 10. This is called *Faith of the operation of God.*

It is a work of Gods own spirit in the soul.

It is such a faith as rests and casts the soul wholly upon Christ for Grace and Glory, Pardon and Peace, Sanctification and salvation.

It is an united act of the whole soul, understanding, will, and affections, all concurring to unite the soul to an all-sufficient Redeemer.

Act. 15. 9. It is such a faith as *purifies the heart*, & makes it clean, it influences & gives strength and life to all other graces.

Now whoever hath this faith, is a Christian indeed; this is the *Faith of Gods Elect.* But then,

2. There is a common faith, not saving, a fading and temporary faith; there is the faith of *Simon Magus*, as well as the faith of *Simon Peter*, *Simon Magus* believed, and yet was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Now *Simon Magus* hath more followers than *Simon Peter*; the faith of most men will at last be found to be no better than the faith of *Simon Magus*. For, First,

The false Professer tryed and test.

First, The faith of most is but a temporary faith; it dures for a while, and then dies and perisheth; true and saving faith, such as is the faith of Gods Elect, cannot die; it may fail in the Act, but not in the Habit; the sap may not be in the branch, but it is always in the root.

That faith that perisheth, that faith a man may have and perish.

Secondly, There is a faith that lies only in generals, not in particulars; as there is a general and particular object of faith, so there is a general and particular faith. The general object of faith is the whole Scripture; the particular object of faith is Christ in the promise.

Now many have a general faith to believe all the Scripture, and yet have no faith to make a particular application of Jesus Christ in the promise.

Devils and Reprobates may believe the truth of the Scripture, and what is written of the dying and suffering of Christ for sinners: but there are but few that can close up themselves in the wounds of Christ, and by his stripes fetch in healing to their souls.

Thirdly,

The almost Christian discovered, or,

Thirdly, There is a faith that is seated in the understanding, but not in the will; this is a very common faith; many assent to the truth.

They believe all the attributes of God, that he is just, holy, wise, faithful; good, merciful, &c. But yet they rest not on him notwithstanding.

They believe the commands are true, but yet do not obey them; they believe the promises are true, but yet do not imbrace and apply them; they believe the threatnings are true, but yet do not flee from them.

Thus their faith lies in assent, but not consent; they have faith to confess a judgment, but none to take out Execution; by assent they lay a foundation, but never build upon it by application.

They believe that Christ died to save them that believe, and yet they believe not in Christ that they may be saved.

Oh my brethren, it is not a *Believing head*, but a *believing heart*, that makes a Christian; *with the heart man believes to righteousness*; without this our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins.

Fourthly,

Rom. 10.

10.

1 Cor. 1. 5

17.

The false Professor tryed and cast.

Fourthly, There is a faith without experience; many believe the Word upon hear-say, to be the Word of God; but they never felt the power and virtue of it upon their hearts and consciences. Now what good is it to believe the truth of the Word, if a mans conscience never felt the power of the Word? What is it to believe the truth of the promise, if we never tasted the sweetness of the promise?

We are in this case, like a man that believes the description others make of strange Countries, but never travelled them to know the truth; or as a Patient that believes all the Physicians say, but yet tryes none of his Positions. We believe the Word, because we cannot gain-say it; but yet we have no experience of any saving-good wrought by the Word, and so are but *almost Christians*.

Fifthly, There is a faith that is without brokenness of heart, that doth not avail to melt or soften the heart, and therefore is not true faith; for the least true faith is ever joyned with a bending will, and broken heart.

Sixthly, There is a faith that trans-

G

forms

The almost Christian discovered, or,
forms not the heart; faith without
fruit, that doth not bring forth the
new creature in the soul, but leaves it
in a state of sin and death.

Eph. 4. 21. This is a faith that makes a man a
sound professor, but not a sound be-
liever; he believes the truth, but not
as it is in Jesus; for then it would
change and transform him into the
likeness of Jesus. He believes that a
man must be changed that would be
saved, but yet is not savingly changed
by believing. Thus while others be-
lieve to salvation, he believes to dam-
nation; for *his web shall not become a
garment, neither shall he cover himself
with his work.*

Isa. 56. 9. Now then, if a mans faith may be
but temporary, or may lie only in ge-
nerals, or may be seated in the under-
standing only, or may be without ex-
perience, or may be without a broken
heart, or without a new heart; surely
then a man may have faith, he may
Hcb. 6. 4. *taste of this heavenly gift, and yet be but
almost a Christian.*

17. A man may go further yet: He
may possibly have a love to the people of
God, and yet be but almost a Christian;

Every

The false Professor seized and cast.

Every kind of love to those who are Saints, is not a proof of our Saintship: *Pharaoh* loved *Joseph*, and advanced him to the second place in the Kingdom, and yet *Pharaoh* was but a wicked man: *Ahab* loved *Jehoshaphat*, and made a league with him, and married his daughter *Athaliah* to *Jehoram*, *Jehoshaphat's* Son, and yet *Ahab* was a wicked wretch.

But you will say, this seems to contradict the testimony of the Scriptures; for that makes love to the Saints and people of God, a sure proof of our regeneration, and Interest in life eternal, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.* Nay, the spirit of God putteth this as a Characteristical distinction between Saints and Sinners in v. 10. *In this the Children of God are manifest, and the Children of the Devil; whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* By Brethren we do not understand Brethren by place, those who are of the same Country or Nation, such are called Brethren, *Rom.* 9. 3. *Act.* 7. 23, 25. Nor do we understand Bre-

The Almost Christian discovered, or,
shewn by race, those who are descended
of the same Parents: such are called
Brethren, *1. 2.* But by Brethren
we understand *Brethren by grace,* and
Phil. 1. 6. supernatural regeneration, such as are
the Children of God; and these are
the Brethren whom to love is a sure
sign that we are the Children of God.

Sol. To this I answer, that there is a
love to the Children of God, which is
a proof of our being the Children of
God.

As for instance, when we love them
as such, for that every reason, as being
the Saints of God, when we love them
for the Image of God, which appear-
eth in them, because of that grace and
holiness which shineth forth in their
conversations, this is truly commen-
dable; to love the godly for godliness
sake, the Saints for Saint-ship sake,
this is a sure testimony of our Christi-
anity. The *love of grace* in another, is
a good proof of *the life of grace* in our
selves: There can be no better evi-
dence of the Spirit of Christ in us,
than to love the *Image of Christ* in
others. For this is a certain truth, that
a sinner cannot love a Saint as such:

An

An *Israélite* is an abomination to
Egyptian.

There is a contrariety and natural enmity between the two seeds; between the Children of the World, and those whom the Father in his eternal love hath chosen out of the World.

It is likeness which is the great ground of love; now there is the highest dissimilitude and unlikeness between an unregenerate sinner, and a child of God; and therefore a child of God cannot love a sinner as a sinner; *in whose eyes a vile person is contemned, Psal. 15. 4.* He may love him as a creature; he may love his soul, or he may love him under some relation that he stands in to him. Thus God loves the damned spirits, as they are his creatures, but as fallen Angels he hateth them with an infinite hatred. So to love a sinner *quatenus* a sinner, this a child of God cannot do, so neither can a sinner love a child of God as a child of God. That he may love a child of God, that I grant, but it is upon some other consideration; he may love a person that is holy, not the person for his holiness, but for some other respect. As,

G 3

I. A.

The almost Christian discovered, or,

1. A man may love a Child of God for his loving, peaceable, courteous deportment to all with whom he converseth. Religion beautifies the conversation of a man, and sets him off to the eye of the world: The grace of God is no friend to a morose, churlish, unmannerly behaviour among men; it provokes an affable demeanour and sweetness to all; and where this is found, it winneth respect and love from all.

Jam. 2. 2.
3. 2. A man may love a Saint for his outward greatness and splendor in the World; men are very apt to honour worldly greatness: and therefore the *rich Saint* shall be loved and honoured, whilst the *poor Saint* is hated and despised. This is as if a man should value the goodness of his sword by the Embroidery of his Belt; or his horse for the beauty of his trappings, rather than for his strength and swiftness.

True love to the *Children of God*, reaches to all the Children of God, poor as well as rich, bound as well as free, ignoble as well as noble; for the Image of Christ is alike amiable and lovely in all.

3. A

The false Professer tryed and cast

10 300 A man may love a Child of God for his fidelity and usefulness in his place; Where Religion in the power of it taketh hold of a mans heart, it makes him true to all his becrustments, diligent in his business, faithful in all his relations; and this obligeth Respect. A carnal Master may prize a godly Apprentice or Servant that makes conscience of pleasing his Master, and is diligent in promoting his interest.

I might instance in many things of the like nature, as charity, beauty, wit, learning, parts, &c. which may procure love to the people of God from the men of the world. But this love is no proof of Charity: For,

First, It is but a *Natural* love arising from some carnal respect, or self-end; that love which is made by the Scripture an evidence of our Regeneration, Col. 3. 14.

is a *spiritual* love, the principal lodestone and attractive whereof, is grace and holiness; it is a love which embraceth the righteous man in the name of

a righteous man, Mar. 10.

200 A carnal mans love to Saints, is a limited and bounded love; it is not universal, to the seed; Now as in sin,

Esth. 10.

The almost Christian discovered, or,
he that doth not make conscience of
every sin, maketh conscience of no sin
as sin; so he who doth not love all in
whom the Image of Christ is found,
loveth none for that of the Image of
Christ which is found in them.

Now then, if the love we bear to
the people of God may possibly arise
from natural love only, or from some
carnal respect; or if it be a limited
love, not extended to all the people of
God, then it is possible that a man may
love the people of God, and yet be
no better than *almost a Christian*.

*Num. 22. 18. A man may obey the commands of
God; yea many of the commands of God;
and yet be but almost a Christian. Bala-
am seems very conscientious of steer-
ing his course by the compass of Gods
command; when Balak sent to him to
come and curse the people of God;
saith Balaam, If Balak would give me
his house full of silver and gold, I cannot
go beyond the word of the Lord my God,
Numb. 22. 18. and so in the 38. verse,
saith he, The word that God putteth in
my mouth, that shall I speak; the young
man went far in obedience, Mat. 10. 20.
All these have I observed from my youth*

up-

*The false Professor tryed and cast
up.* And yet he was but an hypocrite,
for he forsook Christ after all.

But is it not said, *He that hath my Object.
Commandments and keepeth them, he it
is that loveth me; and he that loveth me
shall be loved of my Father, and I will love
him, and manifest my self unto him,
Joh. 14. 12.* And doth not our Lord
Christ tell us expressly, *ye are my friends
if ye do what I command you, Joh. 15.
14.* And can a man be a friend of Christ,
and yet be but almost a Christian.

I answer, that there is an obedience
to the commands of Christ which is
a sure proof of our Christianity and
friendship to Christ.

This obedience hath a three-fold
property.

It is { *Evangelical.*
Universal.
Continual.

First, It is *Evangelical* obedience,
and that both in matter and manner,
ground and end.

In the *Matter* of it; and that is what
God requires, *John 15. 14. Ye are my
friends, if ye do whatever I command
you.*

In the *Manner* of it, and that is accord-
G 5 ding

For almost Christian discovered, or,
ing as God requires, Job. 4. 24. God
is a Spirit, and they that worship him,
must worship him in Spirit and in truth.

In the ground of it, and that is a pure
heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeign-
ed, 1 Tim. 1. 5.

In the end of it, and that is the ho-
nour and glory of God; whatever ye do,
do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31.

Secondly, It is an universal obedience
which extendeth it self to all the
commands of God alike; it respects
the duties of both Tables; such was the
obedience of Caleb, who followed the
Lord fully; and of David, who had re-
spect to all his commands.

Thirdly, It is a continual obedience,
a putting the hand to Gods Plow with-
out looking back; I have enclined my
heart to perform thy statutes alway, even
to the end, Psal. 119. 112.

He that thus obeys the command of
God, is a Christian indeed, a friend of
Christ indeed; but all obedience to the
commands of God, is not this obedi-
ence. For,

1. There is a partial obedience, a
piece-meal Religion, when a man o-
beys God in one command, and not in
another

um. 14.

Pl. 119. 6.

incipere
alliorum
st. perse-
rare
corum.
can.

The false Professor reyes and
another; owns him in one duty,
not in another; when a man seems to
make conscience of the duties of one
Table and not of the duties of another.
This is the Religion of most.

Now this obedience is no obedi-
ence; for as he that doth not love
God *above all*, doth not love God *at*
all; so he that doth not obey *all* the
commands *universally*, cannot be said
to obey any Command *truly*. It is said
of those in *Samaria*, that they *feared*
the Lord, and *served their own gods after*
their own manner, 2 Kings 17. 33. And
yet in the very next verse it is said,
They feared not the Lord; so that their
fear of the Lord was no fear: In like
manner that obedience to God is no o-
bedience, which is but a partial and
piece-meal obedience.

2. A man may obey much, and yet
be in his old nature; and if so, then
all his obedience in that estate, is but
splendidum peccatum, a painted sin;
he that offereth an Oblation, is as if he
offereth swine's blood; and he that burneth
incense, as if he blessed an Idol, Isa. 66. 3.
The nature must be renewed, before
the command can be rightly obeyed,
for,

The *alms* Christian discovered, or,
for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth
good fruit, Mat. 7. 18. Whatever a man's
performances are, they cannot be cal-
led obedience, whilst the heart remain-
eth unregenerate, because the *Principle*
is false and unsound; every duty done
by a believer, is accepted of God as a
part of his Obedience to the will of
God, though it be done in much weak-
ness; because though the believers
hand is weak, yet his heart is right;
the hypocrite may have the most
active hand, but the believer hath the
most faithful and sincere heart.

3. A man may obey the Law, and
yet have no love to the Lawgiver; a
carnal heart may do the command of
God, but he cannot love God, and
therefore cannot do it aright; for
love to God is the foundation and
spring of all true obedience; every
Command of God is to be done in
love; this is the fulfilling of the Law,
Rom. 13. 10. The Apostle saith,
Though I bestow all my goods to feed the
poor, and though I give my body to be
burned (these seem to be acts of the
highest obedience) yet if I have not
love, it profit me nothing, 1 Cor. 13. 3.

The false Professer tryed and cast

4. I might add, that a man may be much in obedience from sinister and base selfish ends, as the *Pharisees prayed much, gave much alms, fasted much*; but our Lord Christ tells us, that it was, *That they might be seen of men, and have glory of men*, Mat. 6. 2, 3, 16. Most of the hypocrites Piery empties it self into vain glory; and therefore he is but an empty vine in all he doth, because he *bringeth forth fruit to himself*, Hos. 10. 1.

It is the end that justifies the action; indeed a good end cannot make a bad action good, but yet the want of a good end, makes a good action bad.

Now then, if a man may obey the Commands of God partially, and by halves; if he may do it, and yet be in his natural state; if he may obey the Commands of God, and yet not love God; if the ends of his obedience may be sinful and unwarrantable, then a man may be much in obeying the Commands of God, and yet be but almost a Christian.

19. *A man may be sanctified, and yet be but almost a Christian*; every kind of sanctification doth not make a man a new creature; for many are sanctified that

The dumb Christian discovered, or,
that are never renewed. You read in
Heb. 10. 29. of them that count the
blood of the Covenant wherewith they
were sanctified, an unholy thing.

But doth not the Scripture tell us,
That both he that sanctifieth, and they
who are sanctified, are all one; for which
cause he is not ashamed to call them bre-
thren, Heb. 2. 11. And can a man be
one with Christ, and yet be but almost
a Christian.

To this I answer; You must know
there is a two-fold work of sanctifica-
tion spoken of in Scripture.

The one common and ineffectual.

The other special and effectual.

That work of Sanctification which is
true and effectual, is a work of the Spi-
rit of God in the soul, enabling it to
the mortifying of all sin, to the obeying
of every command, to walking with
God in all well-pleasing.

Now whoever is thus sanctified, is
one with him that sanctifieth. Christ
will not be ashamed to call such bre-
thren, for they are *flesh of his flesh, and*
bone of his bone.

But then there is a more common
work of Sanctification, which is in-
effectual

The false Professor tryed and
 effectual as to the two great works of
 dying to sin, and living to God. This Room
 kind of sanctification may help to re-
 strain sin, but not to mortifie sin; it
 may lop off the boughs, but it layeth
 not the Axe to the root of the tree;
 it sweeps and garnishes the room with
 common virtues, but doth not adorn it Mat. 12.
 with saving graces; so that a man is 44
 but almost a Christian, notwithstanding
 this Sanctification.

Or thus, $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Inward} \\ \text{and} \\ \text{Outward} \end{array} \right\} \text{Sanctification.}$
 there is an

Inward Sanctification, is that which
 deals with the Soul and its faculties,
 understanding, conscience, will, me-
 mory and affections. *Outward Sancti-*
fication is that which deals with the
 life and conversation; both these must
 concur to make a man a Christian in-
 deed; therefore the Apostle puts them
 together in his prayer for the *Thessa-*
lonians, 1 Thes. 5. 23. *The God of peace*
sanctifie you wholly, and I pray God your
whole spirit, and soul, and body, be pre-
served blameless unto the coming of our
Lord Jesus Christ. A man is then
 sanctified wholly, when he is sanctified
 both

The almost Christian discovered, or,

*Non Mag-
na mundi-
cia, sed im-
munda ma-
nus, mens-
ura sincera
Deo pla-
cent.*

both inwardly and outwardly, both in heart and affections, and in life and conversation. Outward sanctification is not enough without inward, nor inward without outward; we must have both clean hands, and a pure heart, Psal. 4. 4. The heart must be pure, that we may not incur blame from within; and the hands must be clean, that we may not incur shame from without; we must have hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and bodies washed with pure water. We must cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1; Inward purity is the most excellent; but without the outward it is not sufficient; the true Christian is made up of both.

Heb. 10.
22.

Now many have clean hands, but unclean hearts; they wash the outside of the cup and platter, when all is filthy within; Now the former without the latter, profiteth a man no more than it profited Pilate, who condemned Christ, to wash his hands in the presence of the people; *Manus abluit & corpus non*, he washed his hands of the blood of Christ, and yet had a hand in the death of Christ. The Egyptian Temples

Temples were beautiful on the outside, but within you should find nothing but some Serpent or Crocodile.

He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, Rom. 2. 28. *Judas was a Saint with-* Joh. 6. 70. *out, but a Sinner within; openly a Disciple, but secretly a Devil.*

Some pretend to inward sanctity without outward; this is the pretence of the open sinner; Though I sometimes drop an idle foolish word, saith he; or though I sometimes swear an oath, yet I think no hurt, I thank God, my heart is as good as the best; such are like the sinner *Moses* mentions, that *blessed himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart, to add drunkenness to thirst,* Deut. 19. 20.

Some pretend outward sanctity, without inward; such are like the *Scribes and Pharisees, who outwardly* Mat. 23. *appear righteous unto men, but within* 28. *are full of hypocrisie and iniquity; fair professors, but foul sinners.*

Inward sanctity, without outward, is impossible, for it will reform the life; outward sanctity, without inward is unprofitable, for it will not reform the

The *almost Christian* discovered, of
the heart; a man is not a true Chri-
stian without both; the body doth
not make a man without the soul; nor
the soul without the body; both are
essential to the being of a man; so the
sanctification of both; are essential to
the being of the *new man*. True sancti-
fication begins at the heart, but works
out into the life and conversation; and
if so, then a man may attain to an out-
ward sanctification; and yet for want
of the inward, be no better than *almost*
a Christian.

20. And so I shall end this long pur-
suit of the *almost Christian* in his pro-
gress Heaven-ward, with this one ge-
neral conclusion.

A man may do all (as to external duties and worship) that a true Christian can; and when he hath done all, be but almost a Christian.

You must know all the commands
of God, have an *intra*, and an *extra*;
there is (as I may say) the body and
the soul of the command.

And accordingly there is an *internal*
and an *external* worship of God.

Now the *internal* acts of worship-
ping of God, are to love God, to fear

God,

The false Professor tried and cast

God, to delight in God, to trust in God, &c.

The *external* acts of worshipping God, are by praying, teaching, hearing, &c.

Now there is a vast difference between these internal and external acts of Worship (and indeed such a difference there is) that they distinguish the *altogether* from the *almost* Christian; the sincere believer from the unsound professor; and indeed in this very thing, the main difference between them doth lie.

1. *Internal* acts of Worship are good, *propter fieri*; the goodness doth adhere intrinsically to the thing done; a man cannot love God, nor fear God, but it will be imputed to him for a gracious act, and a great part of his holiness.

But now *external* acts of Worship, are not denominated good, so much from the matter done, *propter fieri* as from the manner of doing them; a man cannot sin in loving and delighting in God, but he may sin in praying and hearing, &c. For want of a due manner.

2. *In-*

2. *Internal Acts of Worship* put a goodness into *external*; it is our faith, our love, our fear of God, that makes our duties good.

3. They better the heart, and greater the degrees of a mans holiness; *external duties* do not alwaies do this; a man may pray, and yet his heart never the holier; he may hear the Word, and yet his heart never the softer; but now the more a man fears God, the wiser he is, *Prov. 1. 7.* the more a mans loves God, the holier he is; love is the perfection of holiness; we shall never be perfect in holiness, till we come to be perfect in love.

4. There is such an excellency in this *internal Worship*, that he who mixes it with his *external duties*, is a true Christian when he doth least; but without this mixture, he is but almost a Christian that doth most.

Internal Acts of Worship, joyned with outward, sanctifie them, and make them accepted of God, though few; *external acts of Worship*, without inward, make them abhorred of God, though they be never so many.

So that though the almost Christi-

an

The false Professor tryed and

an may do all those duties in hypocritic, which a true Christian doth in sincerity; nay, though in doing external duties, he may out-do the true Christian, (as the Comet makes a greater blaze than the true Star: If Eliab fast and mourn, Baal's Priests will cut their flesh) Yet he cannot do those internal duties that the meanest true Christian can.

The almost Christian can pray, but he cannot love God; he can teach or hear, &c. but he cannot take delight in God.

Mark Job's query concerning the hypocrite; *Will he delight himself in the Almighty.* Job. 27. 10

He will pray to the Almighty, but will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he take pleasure in God? *This is Christianorum propria virtus.*

Ah no! he will not, he cannot.

Delight in God, ariseth from a suitability between the faculty and the object; now none more unsuitable than God and a carnal heart. *Hæc propria est delectationis materia, si cum habeas quæ desideraveris perfruaris.*

Delight arises from the having what we desire, and from enjoying what we have; how then can he delight in God, that neither enjoyeth, nor hath, nor truly desireth God? *in Pined. loc. De-*

The almost Christian discouraged, or,

Delight in God is one of the highest exercises of grace, and therefore how can he delight in God, that hath no grace?

Why then should any Saint of God be discouraged when he hears how far the almost Christian may go in the way to heaven, when as he that is the weakest true believer, — that hath the least true grtce, goes farther then he, for he believes in, and loves God?

Should the *almost Christian* do less (as to matter of external duties) yet if he had but the least true faith, the least sincerity of love to Christ, he would surely be saved; and should the true Christian do ten times more duties than he doth, yet had he not faith in Christ, and love to Christ, he would surely be rejected.

Oh therefore let not any weak believer be discouraged, though hypocrites may out do them, and go beyond them in duty; for all their duties are done in hypocrisie; but your faith and love to God in duties, is a proof of your sincerity.

I. I do not speak this to discourage any soul in the doing of duties, or to beat

The false Professor tryed and

beat down outward performances, but to
glorifie the soul in the doing of them.

As the Apostle saith, *Covet earnestly* 1 Cor. 13.
the best gifts, but yet I shew unto you a 32.

more excellent way: So I say, covet the
best gifts, covet much to be in duties,

much in prayer, much in hearing, &c.

But yet I shew you a more excellent way,

and that is, the way of faith and love;

pray much, but then believe much

too. Hear much, read much, but then

love God much too. Delight in the

Word and Ordinances of God much,

but then delight in the God of Ordi-

nances more.

And when you are most in duties as

to your use of them; Oh then be sure

to be above duties, as to your resting

and dependance upon them. Would

you be Christians indeed, altogether

Christians? O then be much in the

use and exercise of Ordinances, but be

much more in faith and dependance

upon Christ and his righteousness;

when your obedience is most to the

command, then let your faith be most

upon the promise.

The professor rests in his duties,

and so is but almost a Christian; but

you

The almost Christian discovered, or,
you must be sure to rest upon the
Lord Christ, this is the way to be
together Christians; for if ye believe,
then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs
according to the promise.

And thus I have answered the first
Query, to wit, How far a man may go
in the way to Heaven, and yet be but
almost a Christian.

1. He may have much knowledg.
2. He may have great gifts.
3. He may have a high profession.
4. He may do much against sin.
5. He may desire grace.
6. He may tremble at the Word.
7. He may delight in the Word.
8. He may be a Member of the
Church of Christ.
9. He may have great hopes of
Heaven.
10. He may be under great and vi-
sible changes.
11. He may be very zealous in the
matters of Religion.
12. He may be much in prayer.
13. He may suffer for Christ.
14. He may be called of God.
15. He may in some sense have the
Spirit of God.
16. He

Thes also Professor tried and

16. He may have some kind of faith.

17. He may love the people of God.

18. He may go far in obeying the commands of God.

19. He may be in some sense sanctified.

20. He may do all (as to external duties) that a true Christian can, and yet be no better *than almost a Christian.*

The second Question.

Why, or whence is it, that many men go so far, as that they come to be almost Christians?

First, *It may be to answer the call of conscience; though few men have grace, yet all men have conscience.*

Now do but observe and you shall see how far conscience may go in this work.

1. *Conscience owns a God; and that this God must be worshipped and served by the creature.* Atheists in practice we have many, such as the Apostle speaks of, *Tit. 1. 16. They profess they know God, but in works they deny him.*

But Atheists in judgment none can be; *Truly a Heathen could say, Nulla gens tam barbara, &c.*

Now there being such a light in con-

H

science

The almost Christian discovered, or,
science, as to discover that there is a
God, and that he must be worshipped;
by the help of farther light, the light
of the Word, a man may be enabled
to do much in the ways of God, & yet
his heart without a dram of Grace.

2. Know this, that *natural consci-
ence is capable of great improvements
from the means of grace*; sitting under
the Ordinances, may exceedingly
heighten the endowments of consci-
ence, though they do not sanctifie con-
science; it may be much regulated,
though it be not at all renewed; it may
be enlightened, convinced, and yet never
savingly converted and changed.

Ye read in *Heb. 6. 4.* of some that
*were once enlightened, and tasted of the
heavenly gift, and were made partakers of
the Holy Ghost.* What work shall we call
this? It could not be a saving work, a
true change and conversion of state:
for notwithstanding this enlight-
ning, and tasting, and partaking, yet
they are here said to *fall away*, *vers. 6.*
Had it been a true work of grace,
they could never have fallen away
from that; a believer may fall, but he
cannot fall away; he may fall foully,
but

The false Professor cryed and said,

but he can never fall finally, for *underneath are the everlasting arms*; his ²⁷ faith is established in the strength of that prayer of Christ, that our faith ^{Luk. 22} fail not; nay he tells us expressly, that ³² it is eternal life which he gives, from which *we shall never perish*, Joh. 10.28.

This work then here spoken of, cannot be any saving work, because it is not an abiding work; for they that are under it, are said to fall away from it; but though it be not a saving work, yet it is a supernatural work; it is an improvement made by the word upon the consciences of men through the power of the spirit; and therefore they are said to *taste the good word of God*, and to be made *partakers of the Holy Ghost*; they have not the spirit abiding in them savingly, but striving with them, and working upon them convincingly, to the awakening and setting conscience on work. And conscience thus stirred, may carry a man very far in Religion, and in the duties of the Gospel, and yet be but a natural conscience.

A common work of the spirit, may lead a man very much in the duties

The Truest Christian discovered, or,
of Religion, though it must be a special work of the spirit that steads a man to salvation; a man may have the assisting presence of the spirit, enabling him to preach and pray, and yet he may perish for want of the renewing presence of the spirit enabling him to believe: Judas had the former, and yet perished for want of the latter; he had the spirit assisting him to cast out Devils, but yet he had not the spirit renewing him, for he was cast out himself. Thus a man may have an improved conscience, and yet be a stranger to a renewed conscience; and conscience thus improved, may put a man very much upon duty.

I pray God none of us mistake a *conscience* thus improved by the word, for a *conscience* renewed by the spirit; the mistake is very easie, especially when a life of duties is the fruit of it.

3. *The conscience of a natural man is subject to distress and trouble; though a natural conscience is not sanctified with grace, yet it is often troubled at sin; trouble of conscience is not incident to believers only, but sometimes to unbelievers also. A believers conscience is some-*

The false Professor tried

Sometimes troubled when his sin is truly pardoned; and a natural mans conscience is troubled for sin, though it is never freed from sin. God sometimes sets the Word home upon the sinners conscience, and applies the terrors of the Law to it, and this fills the soul with fear and horror of death and Hell; now in this case the soul usually betakes it self to a life of duties, meekly to fence trouble out of conscience.

When *Absalom* sets fire on *Joab's* ^{2 Sam. 17} Corn-fields, then he runs to him, though ^{30, 31} he refused before; so when God lets a spark of Hell (as it were) fall upon the sinners conscience, in applying the terrors of the Word, this drives the sinner to a life of duties which he never minded before. The ground of many a mans engaging in Religion, is the trouble of his conscience; and the end of his continuing in Religion, is the quieting of conscience; if conscience would never check him, God should never hear from him.

Natural conscience hath a voice, and speaks aloud many times in the sinners ears, and telleth him, this ought not to be done, God must not

The Unregenerate Christian discovered, or,
be forgotten, the *Commands of God*
ought not to be slighted; living in sin
will be the ruin of the soul; and hence
it is that a natural man runs to duties,
and takes up a lifeless and graceless
profession, that he may thereby silence
conscience. As a man sick in his sto-
mach, whatever sweet morsel he hath
eaten he brings up all; and although
it was sweet in the eating, yet it is bit-
ter in the rising.

So it fareth with the sinner, when
he is Sermon-sick, or conscience-sick;
though his sin was *sweet* in the pra-
ctice, yet the thought of it riseth bit-
ter upon the conscience, and then his
profession of Religion is the Pill he
rouleth about in his mouth, to take a-
way the bitterness of sins taste.

4. *Natural conscience enlightened by the*
Word, may discover to a man much of the
miserie of a natural state; though not
effectually to bring him out of it, yet
so as to make him restless & weary in
it; it may shew a sinner his nakedness,
and hereupon the soul runneth to a
life of *duties*, thinking hereby to stead
the misery of his case, and to make a
covering for his nakedness. It is said,

Gen.

The false Professor tryed and cast

Gen. 3. 7. That when Adam and Eve saw they were naked, they sowed Fig-leaves together, and made themselves a covering. So when once the sinner seeth his nakedness and vileness, by reason of sin, whereas he should run to Christ, and close with him, and beg his righteousness for a covering, *that the shame of his nakedness do not appear*, Rev. 3. 18. He rather runneth to a life of duties and performances, and thus maketh himself a covering with the *fig-leaves* of a profession, without Christ truly imbraced, and conscience at all renewed. Natural man would faine be his own Saviour, and supposeth a change of state to be a thing within his own power, and that the true work of grace, lieth in leaving off the practice of sin, and taking up a life of duties; and therefore upon this principle doth many a graceless professor outstrip a sound believer; for he resteth in his own performances, and hopeth these will commend him to God. •

If a natural conscience may go thus Quietly far, then what difference is there between this natural conscience in Hypocrites and Sinners, and a renewed con-

The *almost Christian* discovered or,
science in believers? Or how may I know
whether the working of my conscience be
the workings of nature only, or else of
grace wrought in it?

I grant, that it is difficult to distin-
guish between the one and the other;
and the difficulty hath a two-fold rise.

1. It ariseth from that Hypocrisie
that is in the best Saints; the weakest
believer is no *hypocrite*, but yet there
is some *hypocrisie* in the strongest be-
liever; where there is *most grace*, there
is *some sin*; and where there is *most sin-*
cerity, yet there is *some hypocrisie*.

Figmalion
made an
Image so
lovely,
that he
deceived
himself,
and tak-
ing the
Picture
for a per-
son, fell
in love
with the
Picture.

Now it is very incident to a tender
conscience to misgive and mistrust its
state upon the sight of any sin; when he
sees hypocrisie break out in any du-
ty or performance, then he complains,
Surely my aims are not sincere, my con-
science is not renewed; it is but natural
conscience enlightened, not by grace purged,
and changed

2. It ariseth from that resemblance
there is between *grace* and *hypocrisie*,
for *hypocrisie* is a resemblance of *grace*
without substance, the likeness of *grace*
without the life of *grace*. There is
no *grace* but an hypocrite may have
some-

The false Professor tryed and cast

somewhat like it; and there is no duty done by a Christian, but an hypocrite may out strip him in it. Now when one that hath not true grace shall go farther than one that hath, this may well make the believer question whether his grace be true or not; or whether the workings of his conscience be not the workings of nature only, rather than of grace wrought in it.

But to answer the Question; You may make a judgement of this in these seven particulars.

1. *If a natural mans conscience putteth him upon duty, he doth usually bound himself in the work of God:* his duties are limited, his obedience is a limited obedience; he doth one duty, and neglecteth another; he picketh and chuseth among the commands of God; or beyeth one, and slighteth another. Thus much is enough, what need any more? if I do thus and thus, I shall go to heaven at last.

But now where conscience is renewed by grace, there it is otherwise; Though there may be many weaknesses which accompany its duties, yet that soul never bounds it self in

H. 5,

work.

The almost Christian discovered, or,
working after God; it never loves God
so much, but still it would love him
more; nor seeks him so much, but still
it would seek him more; nor doth it
serve God so well at any time, but still
it makes conscience of serving him
better. *A renewed conscience is a spring*
of universal obedience, Psal. 119. 128.
for it seeth an infinite excellency, and
goodness, and holiness in God, and
therefore would fain have its service
rise up towards some proportionable-
ness to the object; a God of infinite
excellency and goodness, should have
infinite love, faith conscience, a holy
God should have service from a holy
heart, faith conscience.

Now then, if I set bounds to my
love to God, or to my service to God;
if I limit my self in my obedience to
the holy God; love one command,
and slight another; obey in one point,
and yet lie cross in another; then is all
I do but the working of a natural con-
science. But on the other hand, If I
love the Lord with my whole heart,
and whole soul, and serve him with all
my might and strength: *If I esteem all*
Gods precepts concerning all things, to be
right,

Mat. 22.

7.

The false Professor tryed and cast

*right, and have respect to all thy Com- Mark
mands, then is my love and service 33.
from a renewed conscience.*

*2. If a natural mans conscience check
or accuse for sin, then he seeketh to stop
the mouth of it, but not to satisfie it; most
of the natural mans duties are to still
and stifle conscience.*

But now the believer chuseth rather to let conscience cry, than to stop the mouth of it, until he can do it upon good terms, until he can fetch in satisfaction to it, from the blood of Jesus Christ, by fresh acts of faith apprehended and applied.

The natural man seeketh to still the noise of conscience, rather than to remove the guilt; the Believer seeketh the removal of guilt by the application of *Christs blood*, & then conscience is quiet of it self. As a foolish man having a Mote saln into his eye, and making it water, he wipeth away the water, and labours to keep it dry, but never searcheth his eye to get out the Mote; but a wise man mindeth not so much the wiping, as the searching his eye; somewhat is got in, and that causeth the watering, and therefore the cause must be removed. Now

The almost Christian discovered, or,

Now then, if when conscience accuseth for sin, I take up a life of duties, a form of godliness to stop the mouth of conscience, and if hereupon conscience be still and quiet, then is this but a natural conscience; but if when conscience checks, it will not be satisfied with any thing but the *blood of Christ*, and therefore I use duties to bring me to Christ; and if I beg the *sprinkling* of his *blood* upon conscience, and labour not so much to stop the mouth of it, as to remove guilt from it, then is this a renewed conscience.

3. *There is no natural man, let him go never so far, let him do never so much in matters of Religion, but still he hath his Dallilah, his bosom lust. Judas went far, but he carried his covetousness along with him; Herod went far, he did many things under the force of John's Ministry, but yet there was one thing he did not; he did not put away his Brothers wife; his Herodias lay in his bosom still. Nay, commonly all the natural mans duties are to hide some sin, his profession is only made use of for a cover-shame.*

But now the renewed conscience
hateth

The false Professor tryed and caught.

hatheth all sin, as David did, *I have covered* Psalm 128.
false way; he regardeth no iniquity in Psalm 66.
his heart; he useth duties, not to cover sin, but to help work down, and work out sin.

Now then, if I profess Religion, if I make mention of the Name of the Lord, and make my boast of the Law, and Rom. 2.
yet through breaking the Law dishonour God; If I live in the love of any sin, and make use of my profession to cover it, then am I an hypocrite, and my duties flow but from a natural conscience: but on the other hand, *If I name* 2 Tim. 2.
the name of the Lord Jesus, and withal 19.
depart from iniquity; if I use duties not to cover, but to discover and mortifie sin, then am I upright before God, and my duties flow from a renewed conscience.

4. *A natural man prides himself in his duties;* if he be much in duty, then he is much lifted up under duty; so did the Pharisees, Luk. 18. *God I thank* Luk. 18.
thee that I am not as other men are; and 11, 12.
why? where lay the difference? why, I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all, &c.

But now take a gracious heart, a renewed.

253 *The almost Christian discovered, or,*
renewed conscience, and when his du-
ties are at highest, then is his heart at
lowest. Thus it was with the Apostle
Paul, he was much in service, in sea-
son, and out of season, preaching up the
Lord Jesus with all boldness and ear-
nestness, and yet very humble in a
sense of his own unworthiness under
all, *I am not worthy to be called an Apo-*
stle, 1 Cor. 15. 9. To me who am less
than the least of all Saints, is this grace
given, that I should preach among the
Gentiles the unsearchable riches of
Christ, Eph. 3. 8. And again, 1 Tim. 1. 15.
Of sinners I am chief. Thus a believer
when he is highest in duties, then is he
lowest in humility; duty puffeth up
the hypocrite, but a Believer comes
away humbled, and why? because the
hypocrite hath had no visions of God;
he hath seen only his own gifts and
parts, and this exalteth him; but the
Believer hath seen God, and enjoyed
communion with God, and this hum-
bleth him: Communion with God,
though it be very refreshing, yet it is
also very abasing and humbling to the
creature. *Hierom* observeth on *Zeph.*
1. 1. Where it is said, that *Cushi* was
the

The false Professor tryed and cast.

the Son of Gedaliah, the Son of Amariah, That Amariah signifieth the word of the Lord, Gedaliah signifieth the greatness of the Lord, & Cush is interpreted humility, or my Ethiopian. So that, saith he, from the Word of the Lord, cometh a sight of the greatness of the Lord, and from a sight of the greatness of the Lord, cometh humility.

Now then, if I pride my self in any duty, and am puffed up under my performances, then have I not seen nor met with God in any duty. But on the other hand, if when my gifts are at highest, my heart is at lowest; if when my spirit is most raised, my heart is then most humbled: if in the midst of all my services I can maintain a sense of my own unworthiness; if Cush be the Son of Gedaliah, then have I seen and had communion with God in duty, and my performances are from a renewed conscience.

5. Look what that is to which the heart doth secretly render the glory of a duty, & that is the principle of the duty, in Heb. 1. 16. ye read of them that Sacrifice to their Net, and burn incense to their drag; where the glory of an action is rendered to

154 *The almost Christian discovered, or,*
to a mans self, the Principle of that a-
ction is selfiſh. *Rivers* run into the *Sea*,
Eccl. 1. 7. that is an argument they came from the
Sea; ſo when all a mans duties terminate
in ſelf, then is ſelf the principle of all.

Now all the natural mans duties run
into himſelf; he was never by a through
work of grace fully caſt out of him-
ſelf, and brought to deny himſelf, and
therefore he can riſe no higher than
himſelf in all he doth; he was never
brought to be poor in ſpirit, and ſo to
live upon another; to be carried out of
all duties to Jeſus Chriſt.

But the Believer giveth the glory of
all his ſervices to God; whatever
Pf. 115. 1. ſtrength or life there is in duty, God
hath all the glory; for he is by grace
outed of himſelf, and therefore ſeeth
no excellency or worthineſs in ſelf.

*I laboured more abundantly than they
all*, ſaith the Apoſtle; but to whom
doth he aſcribe the glory of this? to
ſelf? No, *ye not I*, ſaith he, *but the*
grace of God which was with me, 1 Cor.
15. 10. When ever the grace of Chriſt
is wrought in the heart as a principle
of duty, you ſhall find the ſoul when it
is moſt carried out with a *ye not I*,
in

The false Professor tried and cast out

in the mouth of it, *I live; yet not I*; *I* Gal. 2. 20. *laboured more abundantly than all; yet not I*; self is disclaimed, and Christ most advanced, when it is from grace that the heart is quickned; the *twenty four Elders cast their Crowns at Christs feet*, Rev. 4. 10.

There are two things very hard; one is to take the shame of our sins to our selves; the other is to give the glory of our services to Christ.

Now then, *If I sacrifice to my own net*, if I aim at my own credit or profit, and give the glory of all I do to self, then do I sow to the flesh, and was never yet cast out of self, but act only from a natural conscience; but if I give the glory of all my strength and life in duty only to God, if I magnifie grace in all, and can truly say in all I do, *yet not I*, then am I truly cast out of self, and do what I do with a renewed conscience. Gal. 2. 20.

6. *Though a natural conscience may put a man much upon service, yet it never presseth to the attainment of holiness*; so that he carrieth an unsanctified heart under all; how long was Judas a Professor, and not one dram

The foolish Christian discovered, or,
dream of grace that he had got? *The*
Foolish Virgins (you know) took their
25.3. lamps, but took no oyl in their vessels;
that is, they looked more after a pro-
fession, than after sanctification.

But now when a renewed consci-
ence putteth a man upon duty, it is
succeeded with the growth of holi-
ness; as grace helpeth to the doing of
duty, so duty helpeth to the growing
of grace; a believer is the more holy
and the more heavenly, by his being
much in duties.

Now then, if I am much in a life of
duties, and yet a stranger to a life of
holiness; if I maintain a high professi-
on, and yet have not a true work of
sanctification; if (like children in the
Rickets) I grow big in the head, but
weak in the feet, then have I gifts and
parts but no grace; and though I am
much in service, yet have I but a na-
tural conscience; but on the other
hand, if the holiness of my conversa-
tion carrieth a proportion to my pro-
fession; if I am not a *bearer of the word*
only, but a *doer of it*; if grace groweth
in seasons of duty, then I do act in the
things of God from a renewed consci-
ence.

7. And

The false Professor tried and cast

7. And lastly, If a natural conscience be the spring of duty, why then this spring runs fastest at first, and so abateth, and at last drieth up: but if a renewed conscience, a sanctified heart be the spring of duty, then this spring will never dry up it will run always, from first to last, & run quicker at last than first. *I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first, Rev. 2. 19. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger, Job 17. 9.*

But you will say, why doth that man abate and languish in his duties, that doth them from a natural conscience, more than he that doth them from a renewed conscience?

The reason is, because they grow
upon a failable root, a decaying root, and that is nature; nature is a fading root, and so are all its fruits fading; but the duties done by a renewed conscience, are fruits that grow upon a lasting root, and that is Christ; gifts have their root in nature, but grace hath its root in Christ, and therefore the weakest grace shall out-live the greatest gifts and parts, because there

The simple Christian discovered,
there is life in the root of one, and
not in the root of another, gifts and
grace differ, like the leather of your
shoo, and the skin of your foot; take
a pair of shooes that have the thickest
soles, and if you go much in them, the
leather weareth out, and in a little
time a mans foot cometh to the
ground; but now a man that goeth
bare-foot all his days, the skin of his
feet doth not wear out; why should
not the sole of his foot sooner wear
out, than the sole of his shoo; for the
leather is much thicker than the skin;
the reason is, because there is life in
the one, and not in the other; there
is life in the skin of the foot, and
therefore that holdeth out, and grow-
eth thicker and thicker, harder and
harder; but there is no life in the sole
of his shoo, and therefore that weareth
out and waxeth thinner and thinner; so
it is with gifts and grace.

Now then, if I decay and abate, and
grow weary of a profession, and fall
away at last; *if I begin in the spirit, and
end in the flesh*, then was all I did from
a natural conscience; but if I grow and
hold out, *if I persevere to the end*, and my

The false Professor tried and cast.

And thus I have in seven things answered that question, viz. if conscience may go thus far in putting a man upon duties, then what difference is there between this natural conscience in hypocrites and sinners, and renewed conscience in believers?

And that is the first answer to the main Query, viz. Whence is it that many men go so far, as that they come to be almost Christians?

It is to answer the call of conscience. Secondly, It is from the power of the word under which they live; though the Word doth not work effectually upon all, yet it hath a great power upon the hearts of sinners to reform them, though not to renew them.

1. It hath vim discriminationis, a discerning, discovering power, Heb. 4. 12. The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joyns and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This is the glass where every man may see what manner

ner

Christian discovered, &c.
of man he is; as the light of the
Sun discovers the little Motes; so the
Jan. 1. 13. light of the World shining into consci-
ence, discovers little sins.

2. The word hath *vim legislativam*,
the power of a Law; it gives law to
the whole soul, binds conscience; it is
therefore frequently called the Law in
Scripture; *unless the Law had been my*
Psal. 119. *delight, &c. To the Law, and to the Te-*
29. *stimony*; this is spoken of the whole
Isa. 8. 20. Word of God, which is therefore call-
ed a Law, because of its binding pow-
er upon the conscience.

3. It hath *vim judicativam*, a judging
power: Joh. 12. 48. *The word that I*
have spoken, the same shall judge him
at the last day; the sentence that God
will pass upon sinners hereafter, is
other than what the word passeth
upon them here; the judgment of
God, is not a day wherein God will
pass any new sentence, but it is such a
day wherein God will make a solemn
publick ratification of the judgment
passed by the Ministry of the word
upon souls here; this I gather clearly
from Mat. 18. 18. *Whatsoever ye shall*
bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven;
and

The false Professor tried and cast.

and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven; so that by bringing a mans heart to the word, & trying it by that, he may quickly know what that sentence is that God will pass upon his soul in the last day; for as the judgment of the word is now, such will the judgment of God be concerning him in the last day.

Indeed there is a two-fold power further than this, in the word.

It hath { *Vim Plasticam* &
 Vim Salvificam.

A begetting and saving power; but this is put forth only upon some.

But the other is more extensive, and hath a great causality upon a profession of goodness, even among them that have no grace.

A man that is under this threefold power of discerning Law and Judgment, that hath his heart *ransacked* and discovered, his conscience *bound* and *awed*, his state and sinful condition *judged* and *condemned*, may take up a resolution of a new life, and convert himself to a great profession of Religion.

3. *A man may go far in this course of profession,*

The devout Christian discovered, or,
profession from affectation of applause and
credit, and to get a name in the World,
Mat. 6. 5. as it is said of the Pharisees, *They love*
to pray in the Market-places, and in the
corners of the streets, to be seen of men.

Many are of *Machiavels* principle,
that the appearance of virtue is to be
sought; because though the use of it is
a trouble, yet the credit of it is a help.

Jerome in his Epistle to *Julian*, calls
such *popularis aura vilia mancipia*, the
base bond-slaves of common Fame. Ma-
ny a man doth that for credit, that he
will not do for conscience; and owns
Religion more for the sake of lust, than
for the sake of Christ; thus making Gods
stream to turn the *Devils Mill*.

Fourthly: *It is from a desire of salva-*
tion; there is in all men a desire of salva-
tion; it is natural to every being, to love
and seek its own preservation; *who will*
shew us any good? Psal. 4. 6. This is the
Language of Nature, seeking happiness
to its self.

Many a man may be carried so far
out in the desires of salvation, as to do
many things to obtain it.

So did the young man; Good Master, *what*
good thing shall I do that I may

in.

The false Professor tried and cast. 165

inherit eternal life? he went far, and did much, obeying many commands, and all out of a desire of salvation: for then, put these together, and there is an answer to that question.

The call of conscience.

The power of the Word.

The affectation of Credit: and

The desire of Salvation.

These may carry a man so far, as to be almost a Christian.

The third Question propounded, is this:

Thirdly, *Whence is it that many are Quest. but almost Christians, when they have gone thus far? what is the cause of this?*

I might multiply Answers to this *Answ.* Question; but I shall instance in two only, which I judge the most material.

First, *It is for want of right and sound conviction;* if a man be not thoroughly convinced of sin, and his heart truly broken, whatever his profession of godliness may be, yet he will be sure to miscarry; every work of conviction is not a through work; there are convictions that are only natural and rational, but not from the powerful work of the Spirit of God.

I

Rational

The almost Christian discovered, or,
Rational Conviction, is that which
 proceeds from the working of a natural
 conscience, charging guilt from the light of
 nature, by the help of those *raisonnements*,
 those common principles of reason that are
 in all men: This is the conviction you
 read of Rom. 2. 14, 15. It is said, that
 the Gentiles who had not the Law, yet
 had their consciences bearing witness,
 and accusing, or excusing one another;
 though they had not the light of Scrip-
 ture, yet they had convictions from the
 light of nature; now by the help of the
 Gospel-light, these convictions may be
 much improved, and yet the heart not
 renewed.

Spiritual
conviction, what?
 But then there is a spiritual convic-
 tion, and this is that work of the Spi-
 rit of God upon the sinners heart by the
 Word, whereby the guilt and filth of sin
 is fully discovered, and the wo and misery
 of a natural state distinctly set home up-
 on the conscience, to the dread and terror
 of the sinner, whilst he abides in that
 state and condition.

And this is the conviction that is a
 sound and through work; many have
 their convictions, but not this spiritual
 conviction.

tin
 wh
 tur
 the
 out
 just
 thin
 rab
 the
 open
 high
 can
 B
 cret
 Hyp
 Dea
 C
 for
 and
 to se
 sins
 worl
 occa
 imm
 God
 they
 know

The false Professor repents and casts

Now you'll say, *Suppose I am at any time under conviction, how shall I know whether my convictions be only from a natural conscience, or whether they be from the spirit of God.*

I should digress too much to draw out the solution of this question to its just length; I shall therefore in five things only lay down the most considerable difference between the one and the other.

1. *Natural convictions reach chiefly to open and scandalous sins, sins against the light of nature; for natural conviction can reach no farther than natural light,*

But *spiritual conviction reaches to secret, inward, and undiscerned sins, such as Hypocrisie, Formality, Lukewarmness, Deadness, and hardness of Heart, &c.*

Observe then, whether your trouble for sin looks inward as well as outward; and reaches not only to open sins, but to secret lusts, to inward and spiritual sins; and if so, this is a sure sign of the work of the Spirit, because the trouble occasioned by these sins, bears a more immediate relation to the holiness of God, who only is offended by them, they being such as none else can see or know.

I 2

2. Na-

The Almost Christian discovered, or,

2. Natural convictions deal only with a mans conversation, not with his state and condition; with sins actual, not original; but spiritual convictions reach to all sins, to sins of heart, as well as sins of life; to the sin of our nature, as well as the sins of practice; to the sin that is born in us, as well as the sin that is done by us.

Where the Spirit of the Lord cometh to work effectually in any soul, he holdeth the glass of the Law before the sinners eyes, and openeth his eyes to look into the glass, and to see all that deformity and filthiness that is in his heart and nature.

The Apostle Paul said, *I had not known sin but by the Law*, Rom. 7.7. How can this be true, that he had not known sin but by the Law, when as the light of nature discovers sin? It is said of the Gentiles, *that having not the Law, they are a Law unto themselves.*

Rom. 2.
14.

This sin therefore that the Apostle speaks of, is not to be understood of sin actual, but of sin original, I had not known the pollution of nature, that fountain of sin that is within, this I had not known but by the Law, and

The false Professor cryed and said,

indeed this is a discovery that natural light cannot make; it is true the Philosopher could say, *πρῶτον καὶ ἀρχαῖον τὸν ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐστὶν ἐπιθυμίαν* *Timon* that lust is the first *apud Lat.* and chief of all sins, but I cannot think *tium.* he meant it of original sin; but of the inordinacy of appetite and desire at most; for I find that the wisest of the Philosophers understood no thing of Original sin; here *Seneca, Erras si rectum vitia nasci putas, supervenerunt, ingesta sunt;* sin is not born with thee, but brought in since. *Tam sine vitio quam sine virtute nascimur.*

Quintilian saith, It is more marvel that any one man sins, than that all men should live honestly, sin is so against the nature of men: how blind were they in this point! and so was *Paul*, till the Spirit of the Lord discovered it to him by the Word. And indeed this is a discovery proper to the Spirit. It is he that makes the sinner see all the deformity and filthiness that is within; it is he that pulleth off all the sinners rags, and makes him see his naked and wretched condition; it is he that shews us the blindness of the mind, the stubbornness of the will,

128 *The almost Christian discovered, or,*
the disorderedness of the affections, the
fearedness of the conscience, the Plague
of our hearts, and the sin of our natures,
and therein the desperateness of our
state.

3. *Natural convictions carry the soul
out to look more on the evil that comes by
sin, than on the evil that is in sin, so that
the soul under this conviction is more
troubled at the dread of Hell, and
wrath, and damnation, than at the vile-
ness and hainous nature of sin.*

But now *spiritual convictions* work
the soul into a greater sensibleness of
the evil that is in sin, than of the evil
that comes by sin; the dishonour done
to God by walking contrary to his will,
the wounds that are made in the heart
of Christ, the grief that the holy Spirit
of God is put to, this wounds the soul
more than a thousand Hells.

4. *Natural convictions are not durable,
they are quickly worn out; they are like
a slight cut in the skin, that bleeds a
little, and is sore for the present, but is
healed again, and in a few days not so
much as a scar to be seen.*

But *spiritual convictions* are durable,
they cannot be worn out, they abide
in

The false Professor cried and said,

in the soul till they have reached their end (which is the *change of the flesh*.)

The *convictions* of the Spirit are like a deep wound in the flesh that goes to the bone, and seems to endanger the life of the Patient, and is not healed but with great skill; and when it is healed, leaves a scar behind it, that when the Patient is well, yet he can say, *Here is the mark of my wound which will never wear out.*

So a Soul that is under *spiritual conviction*, his wound is deep, and not to be healed but by the great skill of the heavenly Physician; and when it is healed, there are the *tokens* of it remaining in the soul, that can never be worn out; so that the soul may say, *Here are the marks and signs of my conviction still in my soul.*

5. *Natural convictions make the soul shy of God*; guilt works fear, and fear causes estrangedness; thus it was with *Adam*, when he saw his nakedness, he ran away and hid himself from God. Gen. 3

Now *spiritual convictions* drive not the soul from God, but unto God; *Ephraim's* conviction was spiritual,

I 4,

and

The almost Christian discovered or,
Job. 31. 3. and he runs to God, *Turn thou me, and
I shall be turned.* So that there is, you
see, a great difference between *con-*
viction and *conviction*; between that
which is natural, and that which is
spiritual; that which is common, and
that which is saving.

Yea, such is the difference, that
though a man hath never so much of
the former, yet if he be without the
latter, he is but *almost a Christian*; and
therefore we have great reason to en-
quire more after this spiritual con-
viction. For,

1. *Spiritual conviction is an essential
part of sound conversion*; conversion be-
gins here; true *conversion* begins in *con-*
victions, and true *convictions* end in *con-*
version.

Till the sinner be convinced of sin,
he can never be converted from sin;
Christ's coming was as a Saviour to
die for Sinners; and the Spirit's com-
ing is to convince us as sinners, that
we may close with Christ as a Savi-
our; till sin be thoroughly discovered
to us, interest in the blood of Christ
cannot rightly be claimed by us; nay
so long as sin is unseen, Christ will be

un-

*The false Professor tryed and cast
unsought. They that be whole, need not
the Physician, but they that are sick.*

2. *Slight and common convictions,*
(when they are but skin-deep) *are the*
cause of much Hypocrisie; Slight con-
victions may bring the soul to clasp
about Christ, but not to close with
Christ; and this is the guise of an Hy-
pocrite; I know no other rise and spring
of hypocrisie, like this of slight con-
victions; this hath filled the Church of
Christ with Hypocrites.

Nay, it is not only the spring of
Hypocrisie, but it is also the spring of
Apostasie; what was the cause that
the seed was said to wither away? Mat.
13. 5, 6. *it was because it had no deep-*
ness of earth. Where there is through
conviction, there is a *depth of earth* in
the heart, and there the *seed of the*
Word grows; but where convictions
are slight and common, there the seed
withereth for want of depth; so that
you see clearly in this one instance,
whence it is that many are but almost
Christians, when they have gone so
far in Religion, viz. for want of sound
convictions.

Secondly, And this hath a near
relation

172 The *untrue Christian discovered*, or,
lation to the former. It is for want of
a *through work of grace* first wrought in
the heart; where this is not, all a mans
following profession comes to no-
thing; that Scholar is never like to
read well, that will needs be in his
Grammar, before he is out of his *Pri-
mer*; Cloth that is not wrought well
in the Loom, will neither wear well,
nor wear long, it will do little service;
so that Christian that doth not come
well off the Loom, that hath not a
13. through work of grace in his heart,
will never wear well, he will shrink
in the wetting, and never do much
service for God; it is not the pruning
of a bad tree, will make it *bring forth
good fruit*; but the tree must be made
good, before the fruit can be good, Mat.
22. 23.

*He that takes up a profession of Reli-
gion with an unbroken heart, will never
serve Christ in that profession with his
whole heart.*

If there be not a true change in
that mans heart that yet goes far, and
doth much in the ways of God, to be
sure he will either die an hypocrite, or
an Apostate.

Look

The false Professer cryed and said

Look as in nature, if a man be not well born, but prove crooked or mishapen in the birth, why he will be crooked as long as he lives; you may bolster or stuff out his clothes to conceal it, but the crookedness, the deformity remains still; you may hide it, but you cannot help it; it may be covered, but it cannot be cured.

So it is in this case; If a man come into a profession of Religion, but be not right born; if he be not *begotten of God*, and *born of the Spirit*; if there *Job 3* be not a through work of grace in his heart, all his profession of Religion will never mend him; he may be bolstered out by a life of duties, but he will be but an hypocrite at last for want of a through work at first; a form of godliness may cover his crookedness; but will never cure it.

A man can never be a true Christian, nor accepted of God, though in the highest profession of Religion, without a work of grace in the heart: For,

1. *There must be an answerableness in the frame of that mans heart (that would be accepted of God) to the duties done by him; his spirit and affections within*

... discovered, or,
within must carry a proportion to his
profession without; prayer without
faith, obedience to the Law given,
without fear and holy reverence of the
Law-giver, God abhors: acts of *inter-*
nal Worship must answer the duties of
external Worship.

Now where there is no grace
wrought in the heart, there can never
be any proportion or answerableness
in the frame of that mans heart, to the
duties done by him.

2. *Those duties that find acceptance
with God, must be done in sincerity.*
God doth not take our duties by
tale, nor judg of us according to the
frequency of our performances, but ac-
cording to the sincerity of our hearts
in the performance. It is this that
commends both the doer, and the
duty to God; with sincerity, God
accepts the least we do; without sin-
cerity, God rejects the most we do,
or can do: This is that Temper of
spirit which God highly delights in,
Prov. II. 20. They that are of a froward
heart, are an abomination to the Lord;
but such as are upright in their way, are
his delight.

Chro.
9.17.

The

The false Professed

The Apostle gives it a great Epithet, he calls it in 2 Cor. 1. 12. *invenietis* O! the sincerity of God, that is such a sincerity, as is his special work upon the soul, setting the heart right and upright before him in all his ways.

This is the Crown of all our graces, and the commendation of all our duties; thousands perish and go to Hell in the midst of all their performances and duties, meerly for want of a little sincerity of heart to God.

Now where there is not a change of state, a work of grace in the heart, there can be no sincerity to God-ward; for this is not *quid proveniens a natura*, it is not an herb that grows in nature's garden; the heart of man is naturally deceitful, and desperately wicked, more opposite to sincerity than to any thing as Jer. 17. 9 things corrupted carry a greater dissimilitude to what they were, than to any thing else which they never were.

God made man upright; now man voluntarily losing this, is become more dislike to himself than to any thing below himself; he is more like a Lion, a Wolf, a Bear, a Serpent, a Toad, than to a man in innocency.

So

So that it is impossible to find sincerity in any soul, till there be a work of grace wrought there by the spirit of God; and hence it is that a man is but *almost a Christian*, when he hath done all.

The fourth Question.

4. *What is the reason that many go no further in the profession of Religion, than to be almost Christians?*

Reas. 1.

1. *It is because they deceive themselves in the truth of their own condition; they mistake their state, and think it good and safe, when it is bad and dangerous: A man may look upon himself as a member of Christ, and yet God may look upon him as a vessel of wrath; as a child of God by looking more upon his sins than his graces; more upon his failings than his faith, more upon his dwelling lusts, than renewing grace, may think his case very bad, when yet it is very good: I am black, saith the Spouse, Cant. 1. 5. and yet saith Christ, O thou fairest among women, ver. 8. So the sinner by looking more upon his duties than his sins, may think he sees his name written in the book of life, and yet be in the account*

The false Professor may be
account of God a very Reprobate.

There is nothing more common,
than for a man to think himself some-
thing, when he is nothing, and so he
deceives himself. Many a man blesses Gal. 6.
himself in his interest in Christ, when
he is indeed a stranger to him; many
a man thinks his sin pardoned, when
alas he is still in the gall of bitterness,
and bond of iniquity. Many a man Act. 8.
thinks he hath grace, when he hath
none; There is (saith Solomon) that Prov.
makes himself rich, and yet hath nothing.
This was the very temper of Laodicea;
Thou sayest I am rich and increased with
goods, and have need of nothing, and
knowest not (pray mind that) that thou Rev. 3.
art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and
blind, and naked. 17.

Thou knowest not] as bad as she was,
she thought her state good; as poor as
she was in grace, she thought she was
rich; as miserable and naked as she was,
yet she thought she had need of nothing.

Now there are several rises or
grounds of this mistake.

I'll name five to you. Supplan-

First, The desperate deceitfulness of the
heart of every natural man, Jer. 17. 9. ^{the} ^{carivum} ^{cor prae} ^{omnis.}

The deceitful Christian discovered, or,
The heart deceitful above all things;
the Hebrew is עקב חלב טבל the word
(עקב) is the same with Jacob's name;
now you know he was a supplanter
Gen. 27. of his brother Esau; he is rightly cal-
36. led Jacob (saith he) for he hath supplan-
ted me these two times.

So the Word signifies, to be fraudu-
lent, subtil, deceitful, and supplanting.
Thus is the heart of every natural
man, עקב טבל deceitful above all
things.

Gal. 2. 4. You read of the deceitfulness of the
Mat. 13. Tongue.

And of the deceitfulness of Riches.
Pr. 31. 30. And of the deceitfulness of Beauty.
Job 6. 15. And of the deceitfulness of Friends.

But yet the heart is deceitful above
them all; nay you read of the deceit-
Eccl. 10. 3. fulness of Satan; yet truly a mans heart
is a greater deceiver than he; for he
could never deceive a man, if his own
heart did not deceive him.

Now it is from hence that a man
presumes upon the goodness of his
case from the desperate treachery of
his own heart.

How common is it for men to boast
of the goodness of their hearts? I
thank

The false Professor tryed and confuted

Thank God, though I do not make such a
shew and pretence as some do yet I have
as good a heart as the best. O do but
hear Solomon in this case, he that trust-
eth in his own heart is a fool. Will any Prov. 28.
wise man commit his mony to the cut- 26.
purse? will he trust a cheat? It is a good
rule *utrumvis amari*, remember to dis-
trust; and it was *Austins* prayer, *Domine*
libera me a meipso, That man that trusts
to his own heart, shall be sure to find
himself deceived at last.

Secondly, This mistake arises from
the pride of a mans spirit; there is a
proud heart in every natural man;
there was much of this pride in *Adams*
sin, and there is much of it in all *A-*
dams sons; it is a radical sin, and from
hence arises this overweening opini-
on of a mans state and condition; *Se-* Eccl. 7. 1.
lomon saith, *Be not Righteous overmuch.* Aug. Sense
Austin speaking occasionally of those 365.
words, saith, it is not *justitia sapiens*,
but *superbia presumentis*; not meant
of the righteousness of the wise man,
but of the pride of the presumptuous
man. Now in this sense every carnal
man is Righteous overmuch, though
he hath none of that righteousness
which

The *almost Christian discovered*, or,
which commends him to God, (*viz.*
the righteousness of Christ, yet he hath
too much of that *righteousness* which
commends him to himself, and that
is *self-righteousness*.

A proud man hath an eye to see his
beauty, but not his *deformity*; his *parts*,
but not his *spots*; his *seeming righteousness*,
but not his *real wretchedness*.

*It must be a work of grace that must
show a man the want of grace.* The haugh-
ty eye looks upward, but the humble
eye looks downward; and therefore

Eph. 3. 8. this is the believers *Motto*; *The least*
1 Tim. 1. of *Saints, the greatest of Sinners*; but the
carnal mans *Motto* is, *I thank God I am*
Luke 18. *not as other men.*

Thirdly; *Many deceive themselves
with common grace instead of saving,
through that resemblance that is between
them*; as many take counterfeit money
for current coyn, so do too many take
common grace for true. *In similibus*

1 Sam. 21. *facilis est deceptio.* Saul took the Devil
for *Samuel*, because he appeared in
14. the *Mantle of Samuel*; so many take
common grace for saving, because it is
like saving grace; a man may be under
a supernatural work, and yet fall short
of

The false Professor *rejoiced* *and* *gloried*
of a saving work; the first falseth na-
ture, the second only reneweth na-
ture, though every saving work of the
spirit be supernatural, yet every super-
natural work of the spirit is not saving;
and hence many deceive their own
souls, by taking a supernatural work, for
a saving work.

Fourthly, *Many mistake a profession*
of Religion for a work of conversion, and
outside reformation for a sure sign of
inward regeneration. If the outside of
the cup be washed, then they think all
is clean, though it be never so foul
within. This is the common Rock that
so many souls split upon, to their eter-
nal hazard, taking up a form of godli- 2 Tim. 3.
ness, but denying the power thereof. 5.

Fifthly, *Want of a home application*
of the Law of God to the heart and con-
science, to discover to a man the true state
and condition he is in.

Where this is wanting, a man will
sit down short of a true work of grace,
& will reckon his case better than it is.
That is a notable passage which the A-
postle hints concerning himself; *I was*
alive without the Law once, but when the
Commandment came, sin revived, and I Rom. 7.9
died. Here

The Doubt Christian discovered, or,

Here you have an account of the different apprehensions Paul had of his condition, with and without the word.

1. Here is his apprehension of his condition without the word, *I was alive* (saith he) *without the Law*; Paul had the Law, for he was a Pharisee, and they had the forms of knowledge, and of the truth of the Law; therefore when he saith, he was without the Law, you must not take him literally, but spiritually; he was without the power and efficacy of it upon his heart and conscience, convincing, and awakening, and discovering sin; and so long as this was his case, he doubted not of his state he was confident of the goodness of his condition; this he hinted when he saith *I was alive*: but then,

2. Here is his apprehension of his condition with the Word, and that is quite contrary to what it was before; *when the Commandment came* (saith he) *then sin revived, and I died*.

When the Word of the Lord came with power upon his soul, when the Spirit of God set it home effectually upon his conscience, that is meant by the coming of the Commandment, then

sin

The false Professor repented

sin revived, and I dyed; that is, I saw the desperateness of my case, and the filthiness of all my self-righteousness.

Then my hope ceased, and my confidence failed; and as before I thought my self alive, and my sin dead; so when God had awakened conscience by the Word, then I saw my *sin alive and powerful, and my self dead and miserable.*

So that this is the first reason why men go no further in the profession of Religion, than to be *almost Christians.*

It is because they mistake their state, and think it good when it is not; which mistake is five-fold.

A deceitful heart.

A proud spirit.

Taking common grace for saving.

Outward Reformation, for true Regeneration.

Want of home application of the Law of God to the heart and conscience.

2. It is from Satans cunning, who if *Reas. 2.* he cannot keep sinners in their open profaneness, then he labours to persuade them to *take up with a* from of godliness: If he cannot entice them on in their lusts, with a total neglect of heaven, then he entices them to such a profession

The Church Christian discovered, or
fession as is sure to fall short of heaven.
He will consent to the leaving some
sin, so as we do but keep the rest; and
to the doing some duties, so as we
neglect the rest: Nay, rather than part
with his interest in the soul, he will
yield far to our profession of Religion,
and consent to any thing but our
conversion, and closing with Christ for
salvation; he cares not which way we
come to hell, so as he gets us but thi-
ther at last.

2. It is from worldly and carnal policy;
this is a great hindrance to many; par-
ticularly many times enters *Caveats* against
Piety. *Jehū* will not part with his
Calves, lest he hazards his *Kingdom*.

Among many men there would be
more zeal and honesty, were there less
design and policy. There is an honest
policy that helps Religion, but carnal
policy hinders it.

We are commanded to be wise as ser-
pents; now the serpent is the subtillest of
creatures, but then we must be innocent
as doves; if *Piety* be without *Policy*,
it wants security; if *Policy* be without
Piety, it wants integrity; *Piety* without
Policy, is too simple to be safe; and *Policy*

without

Mat. 10.

16.

Gen. 3. 1.

The false Professor tried and cast

without Piety, is too subtil to be good.

Let men be as wise, as prudent, as subtil, as watchful as they will, but then let it be in the way of God, let it be joynd with holiness and integrity.

That is a cursed wisdom that forbids a man to lanch any farther out in the depth of Religion, than he can see the Land, lest he be taken in a storm before he can make safe to shore again.

4. *There is some lust espoused in the* Reas. 4.

heart, that hinders a hearty close with

Christ: though they bid fair, yet they

come not to Gods terms; the young

man would have eternal life, and he bid

fair for it, a willing obedience to eve- Mat. 19.

ry command but one; but one only, 20.

and will not God abate him one? is he

so severe? will he not come down a

little in his terms, when a man rises so

high? must man yield all? will God

yield nothing:

No, my Brethren, he that underbids

for Heaven, shall as surely lose it as he

that will give nothing for it; he that

will not give all he hath, *part with all for* Mat. 13.

the Pearl of price, shall as surely go with- 45, 46.

out it, as he that never once cheapens

it.

That

The not coming up to Gods terms, is the ruine of thousands of souls; nay, it is that upon which all that perish, do perish; a naked sinner, to a naked Christ; a bleeding broken sinner, to a bleeding broken Christ; these are Gods terms.

Most Professors are like Iron between two equal Loadstones; God draws, and they propend towards God; and the World draws, and they incline to the World; they are between both, they would not leave God for the World, if they might not be engaged to leave the World for God.

But if they must part with all, with every lust, every darling, every beloved sin, why then the spirit of *Demas* *2 Tim. 4. 10.* possesses them, and God is forsaken by them.

My brethren, this is the great reason why many that are come to be almost Christians, go no farther; some one beloved lust or other hinders them, and after a long and high profession, parts them and Christ for ever; they *Gal. 5. 7.* *did run well,* but here it is that they give out, and after all fall short, and perish to eternity.

Thus

The same Professor used and said

Thus having answered these four questions, viz.

1. *How far a man may go in the way to heaven, & yet be but almost a Christian?*

2. *Whence it is that a man goeth so far as to be almost a Christian?*

3. *Whence it is that a man is but almost a Christian when he hath gone thus far?*

4. *What is the Reason men go no farther in Religion, than to be almost Christians?*

I proceed now to the *Application*.

1. *That salvation is not so easie a thing* Inscr. 1. as it is imagined to be; this is attested by our Lord Christ himself, *Mat. 7. 14.* *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.* The gate of conversion is a very strait gate, and yet every man that would be saved eternally, must enter in at this strait gate; for salvation is impossible without it. *Except a man be Joh. 3. 3.* born again (*ἄνωθεν*; born from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

Not that this gate is strait simply, and in respect of it self; no, for converting grace is free, the gate of mercy stands open all the day long; in the ten-

K

dēra

Thus

John 12. ders of Gospel-grace, none are excluded, unless they exclude themselves.
 John 13. Christ doth not say; if such and such
 John 6. 37. will come to me I will not cast them
 John 12. out; but him that cometh unto me (be he
 John 12. who or what he will, if he hath a heart to
 John 12. close with me) I will in no wise cast him
 out: he saith not, if this or that man
 will, here is water of life for him; but,
 John 12. 17. If any man will let him take the water of
 life freely. Christ grudgeth mercy to
 none: though salvation was dearly pur-
 chased for us, yet it is freely proffered us.

So that the gate which leadeth to life, is not strait on Christs part, or in respect of its self, but it is strait in respect of us, because of our lust and corruptions, which make the entrance difficult, a needles eye is big enough for a thread to pass through, but it is a strait passage for a cable rope; either the needles eye must be enlarged, or the cable-rope must be untwisted, or the entrance is impossible. So it is in this case, the gate of conversion is a very strait passage for a carnal corrupt sinner to go in at, the soul can never pass through with any one lust beloved & espoused, and therefore the sinner must be untwisted.

The Judge twisted from every lust, he must lay aside the love of every sin, or he can never enter in at this gate, for it is a strait gate. And when he is in at this strait gate, he meeteth with a narrow way to walk in; So our Lord Christ saith, *Narrow is the way that leadeth to life*, and what way is this but the way of Sanctification? *for without holiness Heb. 12. no man shall ever see the Lord:*

Now this way of sanctification is a very narrow way; for it lies over the neck of every lust, and in the exercise of every grace, subduing the one, and improving the other; dying daily, and yet living daily; dying to sin, and living to God, this is the way of Sanctification: and oh how few are there that walk in this way! the broad way hath many Travellers in it, but this narrow way is like the ways of Canaan in the days of Shamgar; it is said, *Judg. 5. 6. in the days of Shamgar the Son of Anah, the high ways were unoccupied, and the Travellers walked through by-way; in the Hebrew, it is* כְּלָלִי לְפָנֵי מַחֲנֶה *through crooked ways; the way of holiness is by the most unoccupied way; so saith the*

Prophecy, Isa. 35. 8, 9. A way shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it; no Lyon shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, but the redeemed shall walk there; the unclean, and the Lion, and the ravenous beast, they are in the crooked ways; none but the redeemed of the Lord walk in the way of the Lord.

It is no wonder then, that our Lord Christ saith of life, that few there be that find it, when as the gate is strait, and the way narrow that leadeth to it; many pretend to walk in the narrow way, but they never entred in at the strait gate; and many pretend to have entred in at the strait gate, but they walk not in the narrow way.

It is a very common thing for a man to perish upon a mistake of his way; to go on in those paths that take hold of Hell, and yet hope to find Heaven at last; those twenty parts forementioned run into destruction, and yet many chuse them, and walk in them as the way of salvation. As many profane and open sinners perish by chusing the way of death, so many formal professors

sors perish by *mistaking the way of life*; this I gather from that our Lord Christ saith, *Few there be that shall it* 1. Cor. 9. which doth clearly imply, what in 24. Luk. 13. 24. he doth plainly express, *Few there be that shall enter in, and are not yet able; many run far, and yet do not so run as to obtain; many bid fair for the Pearl of Price, and yet go without it; Hell is had with ease, but the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence*, Mat. 11. 12.

2. If many go thus far in the way to Heaven, and yet miscarry; O then what shall be the end of them who fall short of these! If he shall perish who is almost a Christian, what shall he do, who is not at all a Christian? If he that owneth Christ, and professeth Christ, and leaveth many sins for Christ, may be damned notwithstanding, what then shall his doom be, who disowneth Christ, and refuseth to part with one sin, one lust, one oath for Christ, nay, that openly blasphemeth the precious name of Christ? If he that is outwardly sanctified, shall yet be eternally rejected, what will the case be of such as are openly unsanctified, that have not only the

plague of an hard heart within, but also
the plague-fore of a prophane life with-
out. If the formal Professor must be shu-
t out, surely then the filthy adulterer, swi-
mish drunkard, the deep Swearer, the pro-
fane Sabbath breaker, the foul-mouthed
professor, yea, & every carnal Sinner much
more, if their be a wo to him that falleth
short of heaven, then how sad is the wo to
him who falls short of them that fall
short of heaven? Ah that God would
make this an awaking word to sinners
that are asleep in sin, without the least
fear of death, or dread of damnation!

Are there may in the World, that
are almost, and yet but almost Christi-
ans? why then it is time for us to call
our condition into question, and to make
a more narrow scrutiny into the truth of
our spiritual estate, what it is, whether
it be right or no; whether we are
sound and sincere in our profession of
Religion, or no. When our Lord
Christ told his Disciples, One of you
shall betray me, every one began pre-
sently to reflect upon himself, Master
is it I? Master is it I? So should we do,
when the Lord discovers to us from
his word, how many there are un-
der

der the profession of Religion, that
are but almost Christians, we should
straightway reflect upon our hearts,
Lord is it *It is my heart unfaund, am I*
but almost a Christian? am I one of them
that shall miscary at last? am I an hy-
pocrite under a profession of Religion?
have I a form of godliness without
the power?

There are two *questions* of very
great importance, which we should
every one of us often put to our selves.

What am I?

Where am I?

1. *What am I?* am I a Child of God
or not? am I sincere in Religion, or am
I only an hypocrite under a *Profession?*

2. *Where am I?* am I yet in a natu-
ral state, or a state of grace? am I yet
in the old root, in old *Adam*, or am I
in the root Christ Jesus? am I in the
Covenant of works that ministers only
wrath and death? or am I in the Co-
venant of grace? that ministers life and
peace.

Indeed this is the first thing a man
should look at, there must be a change
of state, before there can be a change
of heart. we must come under a

R. 4.

change

36.

change of Covenant, before we can be under a change of condition: For the new heart, and the new spirit is promised in the new Covenant; there is nothing of that to be heard of in the old; now a man must be under the new Covenant, before he can receive the blessing promised in the new Covenant; he must be in a new Covenant-state, before he can receive a new Covenant-heart; no mercy, no pardon, no change, no conversion, no grace dispensed out of Covenant; therefore this should be our great enquiry; for if we know not where we are, we cannot know what we are; and if we know not what we are, we cannot be what we should be, viz. altogether Christians. Let me then beseech you press this duty upon you that are Professors; try your own hearts, examine your selves whether you are in the faith, prove your own selves. I urge this upon most cogent arguments.

Cor. 13.

am. I. 12.

1. Because many rest in a notion of godliness, and outward shews of Religion, and yet remain in their natural condition; many are bearers of the Word, but not doers of it; and so do damage their own souls. Some neither hear nor do; these are

The Jews and Pharisees
are prophane sinners; some both hear
and do, these are true believers, some
hear, but they do not do, these are hypo-
critical Professors;

He that slightes the ordinances, can-
not be a true Christian; but yet it is
possible a man may own them, and pos-
sess them and yet be no true Christian;
who would trust to a profession, that
shall see Judas a Disciple, an Apostle, a
Preacher of the Gospel, one that cast
out Devils, to be cast out himself? He
is not a Jew which is one outwardly, nei-
ther is that Circumcision which is outward
in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one
inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the
heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, Mat.
whose praise is not of men, but of God.

2. Because Errors in the first founda-
tion are very dangerous; If we be not
right in the main, in the fundamental
work; if the foundation be not laid in
grace in the heart, all our following
profession comes to nothing; the house
is built upon a sandy foundation, and
though it may stand for a while, yet
when the floods come, and the winds blow Rom. 7.
and beat upon it, great will be the fall of it. 17.

3. Because many are the deceits that

Devils cheat most men by a *partial* obedience to some commands, for universal obedience to all. Endless are the delusions that Satan fastens upon souls, for want of this self-searching. It is necessary therefore, that we try our state least we take the shadow for the substance, and embrace a cloud instead of *sun*.

4. Satan will try us at *any time* or *place*; hee'l winnow us, and sift us to the bottom; and if we now rest in a groundless confidence, it will then end in a comfortless despair.

Nay God himself will search and try us, at the day of Judgment especially; and who can abide that tryal, that never tries his own heart?

5. *Whatsoever a mans state be, whether he be altogether a Christian or no, whether his Principle be sound or no, yet it is good to examine his own heart; if he find his heart good, his principles right and sound, this will be matter of rejoicing; if he find his heart rotten, his principles false and unsound, the discovery is in order to a renewing; if a man have a disease upon him,*

and know it, he may find in the Phy-
sician in time, but when said vexation
will not begin to cure a disease till it be
spent, cure itself. For a man to be grace-
less, and not see it till it be too late, to
think himself a Christian when he is
not, and that he is in the right way to
heaven, when he is in the ready way
to hell, and yet not know it till a
death-bed, or a judgment-day confute
his confidence, this is the most irreco-
verable misery.

These are the grounds upon which I
press this duty, of examining our state,
O that God would help us in the do-
ing this necessary duty.

You'll say, *But how shall I come to
know whether I am almost, or altogether
a Christian?* If a man may go so far
and yet miscarry, how shall I know
when my foundation is right, when I
am a Christian indeed?

The altogether Christian closes with,
and accepts of Christ upon Gospel-terms.
True Union makes a true Christian:
many close with Christ, but it is upon
their own terms, they take him and
own him, but not as God offers him.
The terms upon which God in the
Gospel

The fullness of Christ

Gospel offers Christ, not, that we should accept of a broken Christ, with a broken heart, and yet a whole Christ with the whole heart.

A broken Christ with a broken heart, as a witness of our humility; a whole Christ with the whole heart as a witness of our sincerity. A broken Christ respects his suffering for sin; a broken heart respects our sense of sin; a whole Christ includes all his offices; a whole heart includes all our faculties. Christ is a King, Priest, and Prophet, and all a Mediator; without any one of these offices, the work of salvation could not have been completed. As a Priest he redeems us; as a Prophet he instructs us; as a King he sanctifies and saves us: Therefore the Apostle says, *He is made to us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; righteousness, and redemption, flow from him as a Priest; wisdom as a Prophet; sanctification as a King.*

Now many embrace Christ as a Priest, but yet they own him not as a King and Prophet; they like to share in his righteousness, but not to partake of his holiness; they would be redeemed

ed by him, but they would not submit
to him; they would be saved by his
blood, but not submit to his power.
Many love the priviledges of the Gos-
pel, but not the duties of the Gospel.
Now these are but almost Christians
withstanding their close with Christ,
for it is upon their own terms, but not
upon Gods. The Offices of Christ may
be distinguished, but they can never be
divided.

But the true Christian owns Christ
in all his Offices; he doth not only
close with him as Jesus, but as Lord
Jesus, he says with Thomas, *my Lord*
and *my God*. He doth not only believe
in the merit of his death, but also con-
forms to the manner of his life; as he
believes in him, so he lives to him; he
takes him for his wisdom, as well as
for his righteousness; for his sanctifi-
cation as well as his redemption.

2. The altogether Christian hath a
through work of grace and sanctification
wrought in the heart, as a spring of du-
ties. Regeneration is a whole change;
all old things are done away, & all things
become new: It is a perfect work as to
parts, though not as to degrees. Car-
nal

Cor. 5.

...al men do duties, but they are done
an un sanctified heart, and that spoils
all: A new piece of cloth never doth well
in an old garment, for the rent is but made
worse. When a mans heart is thorough-
ly renewed by grace, the mind living-
ly enlightened, the conscience thorough-
ly convinced, the will truly humbled
and subdued, the affections spiritually
raised and sanctified; and when mind,
and will, and conscience, and affecti-
ons, all joyn issue to help on with the
performance of the duties commanded,
then is a man altogether a Christian.

3. He that is altogether a Christian,
looks to the manner, as well as to the mat-
ter of his duties; not only that they be
done, but how they be done. He knows
the Christians priviledges lye in Pro-
nouns, but his duty in Adverbs; it must
not be only *bonum* good, but it must be
bone, that good must be rightly done.

Here the almost Christian fails, he
doth the same duties that others do
for the matter, but he doth them not
in the same manner; while he minds
the substance, he regards not the cir-
cumstance: If he pray, he regards not
faith and fervency in prayer; if he hear,

Jam. 5. 1

Luk. 8. 1

18. *And how you hear, if he obeys, he looks
19. to the frame of his heart in obey-
ing, and therefore miscarries in all he
doth, *non enim ex integra causa, ma-
lum ex quolibet defectu*; any of these de-
fects spoil the good of every duty.*

20. *The altogether Christian is known
by his sincerity, in all his performances.
Whatever a mans does in the duties of
the Gospel, he cannot be a Christian
without sincerity. Now the almost
Christian fails in this; for though he
doth much, prays much, hears much,
obeys much, yet he is an hypocrite
under all.*

21. *He that is altogether a Christian,
hath an answerableness within to the Law
without. There is a connaturalness be-
tween the Word of God, and the will of
a Christian; his heart is (as it were)
the transcript of the Law; the same
holiness that is commanded in the
Word, is implanted in his heart; the
same conformity to Christ that is con-
joynded by the Word of God is wrought
in the soul by the Spirit of God. The
same obedience which the Word re-
quireth of him, the Lord enableth to
perform*

perform by his grace bestowed on him. This is that which is promised in the New Covenant, *I will put my Law* Heb. 8. 10. *in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,* Jer. 31. 33. Now the writing his Law in us, is nothing else but his working that grace and holiness in us which the Law commandeth, and requireth of us.

In the Old Covenant-Administration, God wrought his Laws only upon tables of stone, but not upon the heart; and therefore, though God wrought them, yet they broke them; but in the New-Covenant-Administration, God provides new Tables, not tables of stone, but *the fleshy tables of the heart,* and writes his Laws there, that there might be *you & your* a law within, answerable to the Law without; and this every true Christian hath; so that he may say (in his measure) as our Lord Christ did, *I delight to do thy will, O my God, thy law is within my heart;* every believer hath a light within him, not guiding him to despise and slight, but to prize and walk by the light without him; the word commands him to walk in the light, and the light directs him

him to walk according to the word.

Moreover from this impression of the Law upon the heart, obedience and conformity to God becomes the *choice* and *delight* of the soul; for holiness is the very nature of the new creature, so that if there were *no Scripture, no Bible*, to guide him, yet he would be *John 1:16* *holy*, for he hath received *grace for grace*, there is a *grace within* to answer to the word of *grace without*.

Now the *almost Christian* is a stranger to this law of God within; he may have some conformity to the word in outward conversation, but he cannot have this answerableness to the word in inward constitution.

6. *The altogether Christian* is much in duty, and yet much above duty: much in duty in regard of performances, much above duty in regard of dependence; much in duty by obeying, but much above duty by believing. He lives in his obedience, but he doth not live upon his obedience, but upon Christ and his righteousness.

The almost Christian fails in this: he is much in duty, but not above it, but rests in it; he works for rest, and

he rests in his works, he cannot come to believe and obey too; if he believes, then he thinks there is no need of obedience, and so casts off that; if he believes much in obedience, then he casts off believing, and thinks there is no need of that. He cannot say with David, *I Psal. 119 have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy Commandments.* 166.

The more a man is in duty, and the more above it; the more in doing, and more in believing, the more a Christian.

7. He that is altogether a Christian, is universal in his obedience; he doth not obey one command, and neglect another, do one duty, and cast off another; but he hath respect to all the commands; he endeavours to leave every sin, and love every duty.

The almost Christian fails in this; his obedience is partial and piece-meal; if he obeys one command, he breaks another; the duties that least cross his lust, he is much in; but those that do, he lays aside.

The Pharisees fasted, prayed, paid tithes, &c. but they did not lay aside Mat. 23. their covetousness, their oppression, they devoured Widows houses, they were un- Mat. 23. 14. natural to Parents.

8. The

8. The *altogether Christian* makes
Gods glory the chief end of all his per-
formances; If he prays, or hears, or
gives, or fasts, or repents, or obeys, &c.
Gods glory is the main end of all; it
is true, he may have somewhat else at
the hither end of this work, but God is
at the further end; as *Moses Rod* swal-
lowed up the *Magicians Rods*, so
Gods glory is the ultimate end that
swallows up all his other ends. Now
the *almost Christian* fails in this, his
ends are corrupt and selfish; God may
possibly be at the hither end of his
work, but self is at the farther end; for
he that was never truly cast out of
himself, can have no higher end than
himself.

Now then examine thy self by these
characters; put the question to thy own
soul, dost thou close with Christ upon
Gospel terms? is grace in the heart the
principle of thy performances? dost
thou look to the manner, as well as
the matter of thy duties? dost thou
do all in sincerity? is there an answer-
ableness within, to the law without?
art thou much above duty, when
much in duty? is thy obedience un-

verse

... Lastly, in Gods glory the end
of all? If so, then art thou not only al-
most, but altogether a Christian.

Oh take heed of being almost, and yet
but almost a Christian; it is a great ^{2. Use of} ^{Cautious}
complaint of God against Ephraim that
he is a cake not turned; that is, half ba- ^{Hof. 7. 8}
ked, neither raw nor roasted, ^{its Juxta}
neither cold nor hot, as ^{Neq}
Laodicea, Rev. 3. 17. Because thou art ^{du, m}
neither hot nor cold, therefore I will spew ^{colu}
the out of my mouth.

This is a con- ^{Greatly unprofitable.}
dition that ^{Exceedingly uncom-}
of all o- ^{fortable.}
thers is ^{Desperately dangerous.}

First, It is greatly unprofitable to be
but almost a Christian; for failing in
any one point, will ruin us as surely as
if we had never made any attempts
for heaven. It is no advantage to the
soul to be almost converted; for the
little that we want, spoyle the good of
all our attainments; we say, as good
never a whit as never the near; *ad ni-*
hilum valet quod non valet ad finem su-
um, there is no profit in leaving this
or that sin, unless, we leave all sin; He-
rod heard John gladly, and did many
things,

*Deus non
vult cum
excipione
coli.*

things, but he kept his *Acordian*, and
that ruined him. *Judas* did many
things, *prayed* much, *preached* much,
professed much, but yet his *covetousness*
spoiled all; *one* sin ruined the *young*
man, that had kept all the commands
but one. Thus he that offends in *one*
point, is *guilty* of all. That is, that lives
willingly and allowedly in any one sin,
he brings the guilt of the violation of
the whole Law of God upon his soul,
and that upon a two-fold account.

1. Because he manifests the same
contempt of the authority of God, in
the wilful breach of one, as of all.

2. By allowing himself in the breach
of any one command, he shews he kept
none in obedience and conscience to
God; for he that hates sin, as sin, hates
all sin; and he that obeys the com-
mand as the express Will of God,
obeys every command. And for this
cause, the least sin willingly, and with
allowance lived in, spoiles the good of
all our obedience, and lays the soul
under the whole wrath of God. One
leak in a ship may sink her, though

Jud. 8. 33.
31. comp.
with c. 19

she be tight every where else; *Gideon*
had seventy Sons, and *but one Bastard*.

And yet that one Bastard destroyed all
his Souldiers: so many one sin spoile all our
services; one least beloved may spoile
all our profession, as that one Bastard
slew all the Sons of Gideon.

Secondly, *It is exceedingly uncomfortable,* as appears three ways.

1. *In that such a one is hated of God
and men;* the world hates him because
of his profession, and God abhors him
because of his dissimulation; the world
hates him because he seems good, and
God hates him, because he doth not
seem so. No person that God hates
more than the almost Christian; I would
thou wert either cold or hot, either all a
Christian, or not at all a Christian.

Because thou art neither cold nor hot,
therefore I will spew thee out of my mouth.
What a loathsome expression doth God
here use, to shew what an utter ab-
horrency there is in him against like-
warm Christians?

How uncomfortable then must that
condition needs be, wherein a man is
abhorred both of God and man?

2. *It is uncomfortable in regard of
sufferings;* for being almost a Christian,
will bring us into suffering; but being

but almost a Christian will never persevere through suffering. In *Mat. 13. 20. 21.* It is said, *He that receiveth the seed into stony ground, the same is he that heareth the word, and with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

There are four things observable in the words.

1. That the stony ground may receive the word with joy.

2. That it may for some time abide in a profession of it, *he dureth for a while.*

3. That this profession will expose to suffering; for mark, persecution is said to arise because of the word.

4. This suffering will cause an apostatizing from profession; for that which is here called offence, is in *Luke 8. 13.* called falling away; *which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

I gather hence, a profession may expose a man as much to suffering, as the power of godliness; but without the power of godliness there is no holding out in a profession under suffering.

...The world have the view of
godliness, and therefore persecute in
the almost Christian more the substance,
and therefore cannot hold it out.

Now this must needs be very un-
comfortable; if I profess Religion, I
am like to suffer; if I do but profess it,
I am never like to endure.

3. It is uncomfortable in regard of
that deceit it lays our hopes under, to be
deceived of our hopes, causeth sorrow
as well as shame; he that is but almost
a Christian, hopes for heaven; but un-
less he be altogether a Christian, he
shall never come there.

Now to perish with hope of heaven,
to go to hell by the gates of glory; to
come to the very door, and then be
sent out, as the five Virgins were; to die
in the wilderness, within the sight of
the promised Land; at the very brinks
of Jordan; this must needs be sad, to
come within a stride of the Gate, and
miss it; to sink within sight of har-
bour; oh how uncomfortable is this!

3. As it is greatly unprofitable, and
exceedingly uncomfortable to be but al-
most a Christian, so it is desperately dan-
gerous; For,

L

1. This

10. That which is open, is better than that which is hid; a man lives in more capacity for conversion, that lies in open enmity and rebellion, than he that boots up himself in the formalities of religion. This I gather from that Parable of the two Sons which our Lord Christ urged to the professing Scribes and Pharisees, Mat. 21. 28.

And There was a man had two Sons, and he came to one and said, go work to day in my Vineyard; he said, I will not; but afterwards repented and went.

Mat. 21. 28. And he came to the second and said likewise; & he said, I go Sir, but went not.

29. to 32. The first represents the carnal open sinner, that is called by the Word, but refuses, yet afterwards repents, and believes. The second represents the hypocritical professor, that pretends much, but performs little; Now mark how Christ applies this parable, ver. 31. Literally I say unto you, that the Publicans and the Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.

And upon this account it is better not to be at all, than to be almost a Christian; for the almost hinders the altogether. It is better (in this respect)

ard) to be a Sinner without a Poenitence; than to be a Professor without conversion; for the one lies fallen for an inward change, when the other rests in an outward. Our Lord Christ tells the Scribe, *Mark 12. 34. Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God;* and yet never like to come there. None farther from the Kingdom of God than such as are not far from the Kingdom of God. As for instance, when there lies but one lust, one sin between a soul and Christ, that soul is not far from Christ; but now when the soul rests in this nearness to Christ, and yet will not part with that one lust for Christ, but thinks his condition secured, though that lust be not subdued, who is farther from the Kingdom of God than he? *Mark 12. 34.* So our Lord Christ tells the young man, *Mat. 20. 21. One thing thou lackest;* why, he was very near Heaven, near being a Christian altogether, he was almost saved; he tells Christ he had kept all the commands, *v. 20.* He lacked but *one thing*; I say, but *one thing*, but it was a great thing; that *one thing* he lacked, was more than all things he had.

10.

11. for it was not a new heart, a stock of grace in his soul, as change of state, as he was weaned from the world; this was the one thing, and he that lacks this one thing, perishes with his all things else.

2. This condition is so like a share of grace, that the mistake of it for grace is easy and common, and it is very dangerous to mistake any thing for grace that is not grace; for in that a man contents himself, as if it were grace. Formality doth often dwell next door to sincerity, and one sing serves both, and so the house may be easily mistaken, and by that means a man may take up his lodging there, and never find the way out again.

What one saith of wisdom, *Mala ad sapientiam preuenissent, nisi se ipsas peruenisse putassent*; many might have been wise, had they not thought themselves so when they were otherwise. The same, I may say of grace; Many formal Professor might have been sincere believer, had he not mistook his profession for conversion, his duties for graces, and so rested in that for sincerity, which is but hypocrisy.

...a degree of blasphemy is pro-
ceeding grace, and yet have his grace. I
gather this from that, *Rev. xix. 10* of *John*
the blasphemy of them which say they are
Jews and are not. This place under-
goes varieties of constructions, *Cretians*
and *Paralms* do not make their blas-
phemy to lie in their saying, *they are*
Jews and are not; but to lie in the Re-
proaches that these *Jews* fastened upon
Christ; calling him *Impostor*, *Deceiver*,
one that hath a Devil, &c. and so forth.

Brightman goes another way; and
saith, this was the Blasphemy of these
Jews, they retained that way of wor-
ship that was abrogated; and thrust
upon God those old *Rites* and *Ceremo-*
nies which Christ Jesus had abolished;
and nailed to his Cross; by which they
overthrew the glory of Christ, and
denied his coming.

But I conceive the blasphemy of
these *Jews* to lie in this, that they said
they were *Jews*, and were not. A *Jew*
here is not to be taken literally and
strictly only, for one of the lineage of
Abraham; but it is to be taken *Allo-*
gically, for a true believer, one of
the spiritual seed of *Abraham*. He is a

For which is an blasphemy; for what for
a man to say he is a Jew when he is
not, to profess an interest in Christ
when he hath none, to say he hath
grace when he hath none, this Christ
calls blasphemy.

But why should Christ call this blas-
phemy? this is hypocrisie; but how
may it be said to be blasphemy; why
he blasphemeth the great attribute of
Gods omniscieny, he doth implicitly
deny that God sees and knows our
hearts and thoughts; for if a man did
believe the omniscieny of God, that
he searches the heart, and sees, and
knows all within, he would not dare
to rest in a graceless profession of god-
liness; this therefore is blasphemy in
the account of Christ.

4. *It is dangerous to be almost a
Christian, in that this stills and serves
to quiet conscience.* Now it is very dan-
gerous to quiet conscience with any
thing but the blood of Christ, it is
bad being at peace, till Christ speak
peace; nothing can truly pacifie con-
science, less than that which pacifies
God, and that is the blood of the
Lord Christ. Now the almost Chri-
stian

that quiet conscience, but not with
the blood of Christ, it is not a peace
flowing from Christ's propitiation, but
a peace rising from a formal profes-
sion, not a peace of Christ giving, but
a peace of his own making, he silences
and bridles conscience with a form of
godliness, and so makes it give way to
an undoing, soul-destroying peace, he
rocks it asleep in the cradle of de-
ceit, and then it is a thousand to one it ne-
ver awaketh more till death or judg-
ment.

Ah my brethren, it is better to have
conscience never quiet, than quieted
any way but by *the blood of sprinkling*.
A good conscience unquiet is the great-
est affliction to saints, and an evil con-
science quiet is the greatest judgment
to sinners.

5. *It is dangerous to be almost a Chri-
stian, in respect of the unpardonable sin,*
the sin that the Scripture saith, can
never be forgiven, neither in this world,
nor in the world to come; I mean, *the sin* Mat.
against the Holy Ghost; now such are 32.
only capable of sinning that sin, as are
but almost Christians.

A true believer cannot, the work of
L 4 grace

place in the heart, that sinning
is done, because sin is against
1 Joh. 9. 9. compared with Chap. 9.
16, 17, 18.

The profane, ignorant, open sinner
cannot; though he lives daily and
hourly in sin, yet he cannot commit
this sin; for it must be from an enlight-
ned mind; every sinner under the
Gospel especially, sins sadly against the
Holy Ghost; against the strivings and
motions of the Spirit; he resist, 1 Joh.

9. 51. Holy Ghost, but yet this is not the sin
against the Holy Ghost.

There must be three ingredients to
make up that sin.

1. It must be wilful, Heb. 10. 26.

If we sin wilfully after we have received
the knowledge of the truth, there remains
no more sacrifice for sin.

2. It must be against light and con-
victions, after we have received the
knowledge of the truth.

3. It must be destitute of malice, in re-
solution of malice; now you shall find all
these ingredients in the sin of the
Pharisees, Mat. 12. 22. Christ heals one

blasphemy in Spi-
ritum San-
ctum est solv'd malice;
una qui
inclinata
malitia

contra proprium animi sui sensum, Spiritus Sancti gratiam
circum Dei, gratiam oppugnat, Luc. 11. Mat. 12.
that

the work of the Holy Ghost, a great
work, which all the people wondered
at, as is written what say the Pharisees
for this? This followeth after, but Devils
by the Prince of Devils, now that this
was the sign against the Holy Ghost, is
clear, for it was both wilful and un-
lawful, and against clear convictions,
they could not but see that he was
the Son of God, and that this work
was a peculiar work of the Spirit of
God in him, and yet they say he
was wrought by the Devil. Whereupon
Christ charges them with this sin
against the Holy Ghost, 33. 13. Now the

Pharisees were a sort of great Professors, this work
for, whence I gather this conclusion, that
it is the Professor of Religion, that
is the subject of this sin, not the open
cardinal sinner, nor the true believer, but
the formal Professor, 33. 13. and 34. 13.

Not the sinner, for he hath neither
light nor grace; not the believer, for
he hath both light and grace, therefore
the formal professor, for he hath light,
but no grace. Here then is the great
danger of being almost a Christian, he
is liable to this dreadful unpardonable
sin.

that time, and then they left him :
It is a notable question, *Job* put con-
cerning the Hypocrite, *will he delight* *Job 22*
himself in the Almighty? will he always
call upon God?

He may do much, but these two
things he cannot do.

He cannot make God his delight.

He cannot persevere in duty at all
times and in all conditions.

He will be an Apostate at last, the
seat of Hypocrisy usually breaks out in
the plague-sore of Apostasy. conversion-
ground is standing-ground, it is firm-
ground, but a graceless profession of Re-
ligion is a slippery ground, and falling
ground. *Julian* the Apostate, was first
Julian the professor. I know it is possi-
ble a Believer may fall, but yet he rises
again, the everlasting arms are under-
neath; but when the Hypocrite falls,
who shall help him up?

Solomon saith, *Who to him that is alone*
when he falls, that is, without interest in
Christ; why woe to him? for he hath
none to help him up. If *Jesus Christ* do
not recover him, who can *David* sell
and was restored, for he had one to
help him up; but *Judas* fell and peri-
shed, for he was alone.

7. This

That which is the least of all that
provokes God to bring down spiritual
Judgments upon a man, is this

Barrenness is a spiritual judgment: now this provokes God to give us up to barrenness: when Christ found the Fig-tree that had leaves, but no fruit, he pronounces the curse of *Barrenness* upon it: *Never fruit grow on thee hence and so forth* 27. 11. The many places thereof, and the many places thereof, shall not be healed, they shall be given to fall.

A spirit of delusion is a sad judgment: why this is the almost *Christian's* judgment, that receives the truth, but not

in the love of it: because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved: for this cause God shall send them strong delusions.

To lose either light, or sight, either Ordinances, or eyes, is a great spiritual judgment: why, this is the almost *Christian's* judgment: he that profits not under the means, provokes God to take away either light or sight: either the Ordinances from before his eyes, or else to blind his eyes under the Ordinances.

To have a hard heart is a dreadful judgment: why, this is the almost *Christian's* judgment: he that profits not under the means, provokes God to take away either light or sight: either the Ordinances from before his eyes, or else to blind his eyes under the Ordinances.

To have a hard heart is a dreadful judgment: why, this is the almost *Christian's* judgment: he that profits not under the means, provokes God to take away either light or sight: either the Ordinances from before his eyes, or else to blind his eyes under the Ordinances.

To have a hard heart is a dreadful judgment: why, this is the almost *Christian's* judgment: he that profits not under the means, provokes God to take away either light or sight: either the Ordinances from before his eyes, or else to blind his eyes under the Ordinances.

To have a hard heart is a dreadful judgment: why, this is the almost *Christian's* judgment: he that profits not under the means, provokes God to take away either light or sight: either the Ordinances from before his eyes, or else to blind his eyes under the Ordinances.

judgment, and there is an appearing
but he hath a hard heart, and is not

My brethren, it is a dreadful thing
for God to give a man up to spiritual
judgment, but it is to be feared, he may

have this being almost a Christian,
promoves God to give a man up to
spiritual judgment, surely therefore it
is a very dangerous thing to be almost
a Christian. He humbly or and so.

8. Being almost and but almost Chris-
tians, will exceedingly aggravate the
damnation, the higher a man rises un-
der the means, the lower he falls if he
miscarries; he that falls but a little
short of heaven, will fall deepest into
hell; he that hath been nearest to
conversion, being not converted, shall
have the deepest damnation when he
is judged. *Capernaum's* sentence shall *Mat. 11*
exceed *Sodom's* for severity, because
she exceeded *Sodom* in the enjoyment
of mercy; she received more from
God, she knew more of God, she pro-
fessed more for God, and yet was not
right with God; therefore she shall be
punished more by God. The higher
the rise, the greater the fall; the
higher the profession, the lower the
dam-

The sheep which he hath
damned, he will strike with a
light in his hand; he will strike under
many convictions; and convictions
never end but in a sound conversion;
as in all Saints: or in a sad damnation;
as in all Hypocrites: praying ground,
hearing ground, professing ground,
and conviction ground, is of all the
workground to perish upon.

Now then to sum up all under this
Head.

If thou be almost a Christian, but
not with a full conversion: If thou be easily
mistaken for a Convert: If thou be in the
great blasphemy: If thou be about which
gives conscience: If thou be subject to a man
to sin: the unpardonable sin: If thou
be liable to Apostasy: If thou provoke
God to give us up to spiritual adultery:
If thou be in that which is
commonly apprehended for damnation:
Sure then to us is very dangerous thing
to be almost, and but almost a Chri-
stian; and to grow weary of it.

O Labour to be altogether Christian;
to go further than they who have
gone farthest, and yet fall short; that
is the great counsel of the Holy Ghost;
So then this young man, 1 Cor. 9. 24.

Lab.

Gr.

Consider you are under the Calling and
 Election of God, 2 Pet. 1:10. *John 1:10*
 Need you any motives to quicken
 you up to this important duty?
 1. This is that which is my only rule. Confid. 1.
 mandated by God, but that which is all
 the commands of God read: A perfect
 conformity of heart and life to God,
 is the summe and substance of all the
 commands both of the Old and New
 Testament. As the Harlot was for the *2 King. 16, 26.*
 dividing of the Child, so Satan is for
 dividing the heart, he would have our
 love and affections, shared between
 Christ and our lusts, for he knows
 that Christ reckons we love him not
 at all, unless we love him above all.
 But God will have all or none. My
 Son, give me thy heart, Prov. 23: 26.
 Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with
 all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all *Luke 10.*
 thy strength, Deut. 6: 5. and as thou shalt love
 thy neighbor as thyself, Mat. 22: 37.
 Look into the Scripture, and see what
 that is upon which your duty stands,
 and you shall find that God hath fixed
 it upon these great duties which alone
 tend to the perfection of your state as
 Christians. God hath fixed your duty
 upon believing, Acts. 18: 27. and upon
 God

God hath fixed your duty upon conscience, Mat. 4. 10. Then shall we say
the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou
serve. Psal. 81. 9. Only let your eyes
be as toward the Gospel of Christ.
So that your duty is fixed by God
upon those two great duties of believ-
ing and obeying, both which tend to
the perfection of your state as Christian
and humble Obedient and obedient

Now shall God command, and shall
not we obey? Can there be higher
motive to duty, than the Authority
of the great God, who will in the
eternal Rule of Righteousness. O let
us then God and keep his commandments
because for this is the way to the eter-
nal dominion, and the will of God
for we read in

John 1. 1. The Word, which was with
God, was God, a perfect and complete Man
dwelt in him; he hath not died his blood
for us, nor satisfied the justice of
God, and redeemed sinners by himself.
No, but he was through his
undertaking, he hath all our sins, and
shed all his blood, that did not the
utmost, satisfied the justice of God to
the utmost, redeemed sinners to the
utmost

he was able to the utmost, and is able to save to the utmost.

It is observed that our Lord Christ when he was upon the earth, in the days of his flesh, he wrought no *complicated cures*, no half cures, but whomsoever they brought to him for healing, he healed them throughout *Mat. 14. 35, 36*. They brought unto him all that were diseased, and besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment, and as many as touched, were made perfectly whole.

Oh what an excellent *Infinitely* Physician is here! none *Sadly* like him, he cureth *Positively*.

He cureth *Infinitely*; none ever came to him for healing, that went without it; he never practised upon any that miscarried under his hand.

He cureth *Sadly*; no sooner is his garment touched but his patient is healed. *73. Expt. Mat. 18. 1.* is no *Iron* *Mat. 1. 31.* touched, but immediately cured, he *& 2. 12.* two blind men, *Mat. 20.* are no sooner touched, but their eyes are immediately opened, *v. 34.*

*He cured all diseases, and all manner of
touchings, were made perfectly whole.*

Now all this was to shew, what a
Perfect and compleat Saviour Jesus
Christ would be to all sinners that
would but come to him. They should
find healing in his blood, vertue in his
righteousness, and pardon of all their
sins, whatever they were. look as
Christ healed all the *diseases* of all that
came to him when he was on earth, so
he pardons all the sins, and healeth all
the wounds of all those souls that
come to him, now he is in heaven.

He is a Saviour throughout, and
shall not we be Salts throughout?
Shall he be altogether a Redeemer, and
shall not we be altogether Believers?
O what a shame is this!

3. *There is enough in Religion to en-
gage us to be altogether Christians, and
that whether we respect profit or
comfort, for grace brings both.*

First, *Religion is a gainful thing*
and this is *argumentum cogens*, a com-
pelling motive, that becometh effectua-
l upon all. Gain is the God whom the
World worships, what will not men
do, what will they not suffer for gain?

what journeys do many take by Land,
what voyages by Sea, through hot and
cold, through fair and foul, through
sunn and shine, through day and night,
and all for gain!

Now there is no calling for gainful as
this of Religion; it is the most profit-
able employment we can take up. *God-
liness is profitable unto all things,* 1 Tim.
4. 8. It is *unus rerum*, a great Reven-
ue; if it be closely followed, it brings
in the greatest income; indeed some
men are religious for the world's sake;
such shall be sure not to gain, but they
who are religious for Religious sake,
shall be sure not to lose; if heaven and
earth can recompence them; for *God
hath both the promise both of the life
that now is, and of that which is to come.*
Ah! who would not be a Christian,
when the gain of godliness is so great!
many gain much in their worldly tak-
ing, but the profit which the true be-
liever hath from one hours commu-
nion with God in Christ, weigheth
down all the gain of the world; cur-
sed be that man who counts all the
gain of the world, worth one hours
communion with Jesus Christ, said
the apostle. *He that has said* now that

that which is called the Golden Rule. It is no where said in Scripture, happy is the man that findeth Silver, and the man that getteth fine Gold, these are of no weight in the balance of the Sanctuary, but it is said, Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding, for the Merchandise of it is better than the Merchandise of silver, and shall gain more of than fine gold, 1010 od 1115. 301

By wisdom and understanding here, we are to understand the Grace of Christ, and so the Spirit of God interpreting Job 28. 28. 30. Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and it shall part from evil, 1010 od 1115. 301

Now of all Merchants, he that trades in this wisdom and understanding, will prove the richest man: and gain of godliness outweigheth all the Gold of Ophir, there is no riches like being rich in grace. For, 1010 od 1115. 301
- 1010. This is the most wealthy richness, when things are not so, silver and gold are not so, we may be, and be happy without them: there is but one thing necessary, and that is the grace of Jesus Christ in the heart, have this, and have all, want this, and want all.

things of this world are more shadow
than substance; pleasure, beauty, and
profit, comprehend all things in this
world, and therefore are the carnal
minds Trinitie. *Interpretation of the
Trinitie in the world. Chapter. The first
in the world. The first in the world.
The first in the world. The first in the world.*
The Apostle Paul calls them, the
lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and
the pride of life. (saith he) which
is the world, and truly if this be all,
all is nothing, for what is pleasure but
a dream and conceit, what is honour
but fancy and opinion, and what is profit
but a thing of nought. *Interpretation of the
Trinitie in the world. Chapter. The first
in the world. The first in the world.*
Prov. 23. 5. The things of the world
have in them no solid substance,
though foolish carnal men call them
substance. *Interpretation of the
Trinitie in the world. Chapter. The first
in the world. The first in the world.*
For now grace is a substantial good,
do our Lord Christ calls it, *Interpretation of the
Trinitie in the world. Chapter. The first
in the world. The first in the world.*
which is substance, *Interpretation of the
Trinitie in the world. Chapter. The first
in the world. The first in the world.*
which is substance, *Interpretation of the
Trinitie in the world. Chapter. The first
in the world. The first in the world.*

Luke
11.

2. 3.

1. John. 2.
19.

1. John. 2.
19.

3. *Godliness is the safest gain*; the gain of worldly things is always with difficulty, but seldom with safety; the soul is often hazarded in the over-eager pursuit of worldly things; nay, thousands do pawn, and lose, and damn their precious souls eternally for a little silver and gold, which are but the guts and garbage of the earth. *Mat. 6. 16.* *What is a man profited to gain the whole world, if he lose his soul?*

But the gain of Godliness is ever with safety to the soul; nay, the soul is lost and undone without it; and not saved but by the attaining of it; the soul without grace is in a lost and perishing condition; the hazard of eternity is never over with us until the Grace of Christ Jesus be sought by us, and wrought in us. *1 Tim. 2. 3.*

4. *Godliness is the surest profit*; as it is life, so it is sure; men make great ventures for the world, but all run upon uncertainties, many adventure much, and wait long, and yet find no return but disappointment, all pass much, and yet reap nothing. But the gain of godliness is sure; *Prov. 11. 18.* *To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.*

And as the things of this world are uncertain in the getting, so they are uncertain in the keeping.

Non enim est curis quoniam quicquid parit tunc.

If men do not undo us, Moths may; if robbery doth not, rust may; if rust doth not, fire may; to which all earthly treasures are incident, as our Lord Christ teacheth us, *Mat. 6. 19.* Solomon limneth the world with wings, *Prov. 23. 5.* *Riches take themselves wings, and pass away as an Eagle towards Heaven.* A man may be rich as *Dives* to day, and yet poor as *Lazarus* to morrow: Oh how uncertain are all worldly things!

But now the true treasure of Grace in the heart, that can never be lost: it is out of the reach both of rust and robbery: *he that gets the world gets a good he can never keep; but he that gets grace, gets a good he shall never lose.*

5. The profit of godliness lieth not only in this world, but in the world to come. All other profit lieth in this world only: riches and honour, &c. are called this world's goods; but the riches of Godliness is chiefly in the other World's goods, in the enjoyment of God

Habemus non alia
etiam
equum

1 Tim. 4. 8
1 Joh. 3. 17.

God and Iesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, among Saints and Angels in glory: Lo, this is the gain of godliness. PL 149.9. *such honour haue all his Saints*

6. The gain of godliness is a durable and eternal gain: all this world's goods are perishing, perishing pleasures, perishing honours, perishing profits, perishing comforts, riches are not for ever, saith Job. *Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?* Gregory upon these words observes that earthly treasures are treasures of snow: what pains do children take to scrape and rouse the snow together, to make a snow-hill, which is no longer done, but the heat of the Sun dissolves it and it comes to nothing: why the treasures of worldly men are but treasures of snow: when death and judgment come, they melt away and come to nothing. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.* Psal. 11. 4.

You see here the great advantage of Godliness: so that if we look at profits we shall find enough in Religion to engage us to be *careful Christians*. Or 12. 12. *If we look at comfort, Religion is the most comfortable Profession: there*

are no comforts to be compared to the comforts of grace and godliness.

1. *Worldly comfort is only outward, it is but skin-deep: in the midst of laughter the heart is sorrowful, Prov. 14. 13.* But now the comfort that flows from godliness is an inward comfort, a spiritual joy, therefore it is called gladness of heart, *Psal. 4. 7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart: other joy smooths the brow, but this fills the breast.*

2. *Worldly comfort hath a nether spring, the spring of worldly comfort is in the creature, in some earthly enjoyment, and therefore the comfort of worldly men must needs be mixed and muddy: an ancient fountain cannot send forth pure water.* But spiritual comfort hath an upper spring, the comfort that accompanies godliness, flows from the manifestations of the love of God in Christ, from the workings of the blessed spirit in the heart, which is first a Counsellor, and then a Comforter. And therefore the comforts of the Saints must needs be pure and unmixed comforts, for they flow from a pure Spring.

3. *Worldly comfort is very fading and*

The Comfort of Christian

20. 5. tranquor; the triumphing of the wicked is but short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment. Solomon compares it to the crackling of thorns under a pot, Eccl. 7. 6. which is but a blaze, and soon out; so is the comfort of carnal hearts: but now the comfort of godliness is a durable and abiding comfort; 16. your heart shall rejoyce, and your joy in man shall take from you.

The comfort of godliness { In Life.
is lasting, and everlasting, { In Death.
it abides by us { after Death

1. 1. 2. First, It abides by us in life; grace and peace go together; Godliness brings forth comfort and peace naturally; the effect of righteousness shall be peace, It is 1. 1. 2. kind of the primitive Christians, they 17. walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, Act 9. 31. Every duty done in uprightness and sincerity, reflects some comfort upon the soul; In keeping the commandments there is great reward; not only for keeping of them, but in keeping of them; as every flower, so every duty carries sweetness and refreshing with it.

Obj. 3. But who more dejected and disconsolate than Saints and Believers, whose lives

They say I suffer need much.

21

are more uncomfortable? whose mouths
are more filled with complaints than
theirs? if a condition of Godliness and
Christianness, be a condition of so much
comfort, then why are they thus?

That the people of God are often-
times without comfort, that I grant;
they may walk in the dark, and have no
light; but this is none of the product
of godliness; grace brings forth no
such fruit as this; there is a three-fold
rise and spring of it.

Sol.

Sin within,

Desertion

Temptation

} without.

1. *Sin within*; the Saints of God
are not all spirit and no flesh; all grace
and no sin; they are made up of contra-
ry principles; there is light & darkness
in the same mind; sin and grace in the
same will, carnal and spiritual in the
same affections; there is the flesh lust-
ing against the spirit in all these; and too oft
the Lord knows, as the believer led
away captive by these warring lusts, so
was the holy Apostle himself; I find
then a law, that when I would do good,
evil is present with me, Rom. 7. 21. and

Gal. 5. 17.

1. 2. 1. 2. 2.

25. *I see another law in my members*

Rom. 7.

M 2

W 51.

*The fleshly Conscience is a law
warring against the law of my mind, and
bringing me into captivity to the law of
sin, and this was that which broke his
spiritual peace, and filled his soul with
trouble & complaints, as you see, v. 24.
O wretched man that I am, who shall de-
liver me from this body of death?*

So that it is, sin that interrupts the
peace of Gods people. In-dwelling lust
stirring, and breaking forth, must
needs cause trouble and grief in the
soul of a believer, for it is as natural
for sin to bring forth trouble, as it is
for grace to bring forth peace, every sin
contracts a new guilt upon the soul,
and guilt provokes God, and where
there is a guilt of sin contracted, and
God provoked, there can be no peace,
no quiet in that soul, till faith procures
fresh sprinklings of the blood of Jesus
Christ upon the conscience.

2. *Another spring of the Believers
trouble and disconsolateness of spirit,
is the desertions of God; and this follows
upon the former, God doth sometimes
disappear, and hide himself from his
people. Verily thou art a God that hidest
thyself. Isa. 45. 15. But the cause of
Gods hiding, is the Believers sinning*

And our desires have separated from
you and your God; and your face hath hid
his face from you, *Isa. 59. 2.* In Heaven
where there is no sinning, there is no
losing the light of Gods countenance
for a moment; and if Saints here could
serve God without corruption, they
should enjoy God without desertion;
but this cannot be while we are in this
state, remaining lusts will stir and break
forth, and then God will hide his face:
So this must needs be trouble. *Thou shalt
hide thy face & I was troubled, Ps. 30. 7.*

The light of Gods countenance shi-
ning upon the soul, is the Christians
heaven on this side heaven; and there-
fore it is no wonder if the hiding of his
face be looked upon by the soul as one
of the daies of hell; so it was by Da-
vid: *the sorrows of death compassed me, Ps. 118. 5.*
*the pains of hell gat hold upon me, I found
trouble and sorrow.*

32 A third spring of that trouble and
complaint that brims the banks of the
Christians spirit, is the temptation of *Mar. 13.*
Satan he is the great enemy 32
of Saints, and he envieth the quiet and
comfort that their hearts are filled
with, when his conscience is brimmed

The *devil* *Christ* *the* *angel* *of* *the* *light*,
 with horror and terror, and therefore
 though he knows he cannot destroy
 their peace, yet he labours to disturb
 their peace. As the blessed spirit of
 God is first a sanctifier, and then a
 comforter, working grace in order to
 peace; so this cursed spirit of hell is
 first a *tempter*, and then a *troubler*, first
 persuading to act sin, and then ac-
 ting for sin: and this is his constant
 practice upon the spirits of Gods peo-
 ple; he cannot endure that they should
 live in the light of Gods countenance
 when himself is *damned* to eternal, in-
 tolerable darkness.

And thus you see whence it is that
 the people of God are often under
 trouble and complaint; all arises from
 these three springs of

Sin within.	}	without
Desertions		
Temptations		

If the Saints could serve God with-
 out sinning, and enjoy God without
 withdrawing, and resist Satan with-
 out yielding, they might enjoy peace
 and comfort without sorrowing; but
 this must be endeavoured constantly here
 but it will never be attained fully but
 in heaven.

But yet so far as grace is the prevailing principle in the heart, and so far as the power of godliness is exercised in the life, so far the condition of a child of God is a condition of peace; for it is an undoubted truth, *that the fruit of righteousness shall be peace*; But suppose the people of God experience little of this comfort in this life; yet,

2. *They find it in the day of death*; grace and holiness will minister unto us then, and that ministration will be peace. A believer hath a two fold spring of comfort, each one supplying it self into his soul in a dying season; one is from above him, the other is from within him: the spring that runs comfort from above him, is *the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the Conscience*; the spring that runs comfort from within him, is *the sincerity of his heart in Gods service*; when we lye upon a Death-bed, and can reflect upon our principles and performances in the service of God, and there find uprightness and sincerity of heart running through all, this must needs be comfort: it was so to *Hazekiah*, Remember, O Lord how I have walked before thee in truth, and

M 4

with a perfect heart, and have done the
which is good in thy sight. *Ips. 38.*

Nothing maketh a death-bed so con-
cave and hard, as a life spent in the ser-
vice of sin and lust; nothing makes a
death-bed so soft and sweet, as a life
spent in the service of God & Christ. Or
put the case the people of God should
not meet with this comfort then, yet,

3. They shall be sure to find it after
death; if time bring none of this fruit to
vigilance, why, yet eternity shall; grace in
time, will be glory in eternity; holiness
now, will be happiness then; whatever is

Col. 3. 7. *is a seed sown in this world, that he shall
be sure to reap in the next world;*

2. 6. 8. *the seed sown to the flesh, shall of the flesh
reap corruption: but he that sows to the*

spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

*in sorrow and
miserie, holiness shall end in joy and*

*glory; Well done thou good and faithful
servant, enter thou into the joy of thy*

*Lord. Mat. 25. 23. Whoever abideth in
the grace of Christ, and conformeth to*

*the life of Christ in this world, shall
live in the joys of Christ in the world*

*to come, and that joy is joy unspeakable
and full of glory; lo, here is the fruit of*

*1 Pet. 1.
11.*

godliness, may now if there be not enough in Religion, whether we respect profit or comfort, to engage us to be Christians throughout.

What an entire resignation wicked Conscience make of themselves to their lusts & passions, we do see, that Lord Christ, if they give up themselves without reserve to the pleasures of sin, and shall we have our reserves in the service of God? they are altogether sinners, and shall not we be altogether Saints? they run and faint not in the service of their lusts, and shall we faint, and not run in the service of Christ? shall the servants of corruption have their ears bored to the door-posts of sin, in token of an entire and perpetual service, and shall we not give up our selves to the Lord Christ, to be his for ever? shall others make a Godmanhood of themselves, and shall not we give ourselves to God in an ever lasting Covenant that can never be forgotten? shall others make a profession of themselves, and shall they take more pains to please those souls, than we do to save ours? and shall we more spend our place of residence, than we do to a Grove of righteousness?

M 5

Which

The duty of Christian discipline

Which do you judge best, to be free
everlastingly, or to perish everlastingly?
My, which do you count the best Ma-
ster, God or the Devil? Christ or you
lusts? I know you will determine it
on Christs side. Oh then! when o-
thers serve their lusts with all their
hearts, do you serve Christ with all your
heart? If the hearts of the sons of men be
fully set in them to do evil, then much
more let the hearts of the sons of God
be fully set in them to do good.

9. If ye are not altogether Christians,
ye will never be able to appear with con-
fidence before God, nor to stand in the judg-
ment of the last and great day. For this
sad dilemma will silence every Hypo-
crite; If my commands were not holy,
just and good, why didst thou own them?
If they were holy just and good, why
didst thou not obey them? If Jesus
Christ was not worth the having, why
didst thou profess him? if he was, then
why didst thou not cleave to him, and
close with him? If my ordinances were
not appointed to convert and save
souls, why didst thou sit under them,
and rest in the performance of them?
Or if they were, then why didst thou

The false Professor

not submit to the power of *shame*. If Religion be not good, why dost thou profess it? if it be good, why dost thou not practise it? Friend how camest thou in *hither*, not having on a wedding garment? if it was not a wedding feast, why didst thou come at the invitation? if it was, then why didst thou come without a wedding garment? Mat. 22. 12.

I would but ask an *hypocritical professor* of the Gospel, what he will answer in that day. Verily you deprive yourselves of all possibility of *apology* in the day of the righteous judgment of God; it is said of the man that had no wedding garment on, that when Christ came and examined him, he was *speechless*; he that is *graceless* in a day of grace, will be *speechless* in a day of judgment. professing Christ without a heart to close with Christ, will leave our souls *inexcusable*, and make our damnation *unavoidable*, and more *intolerable*.

These are the motives to enforce the duty, and oh that God would let them come upon your hearts and consciences, that you might not dare to rest a moment longer in a half work,

OC

or in being content with a little
but that you might be altogether
Christians.

But you will say possibly, how shall I
do I what means shall I use, that I may
attain to a thorough work in my heart,
that I may be no longer almost, but alto-
gether a Christian?

Now I shall lay down three Rules
of direction, instead of many, to further
and help you in this important duty, &
to leave this work to Gods blessing.

First, Break off all false peace of con-
science, this is the Devils Bond to hold
the soul from seeking after Christ. As
there is the peace of God, so there is
the peace of Satan; but they are easily
known, for they are as contrary as hea-
ven and hell, as light and darkness.

The peace of God flows from a work
of grace in the soul, and is the peace
of a Regenerate state; but the peace of
Satan is the peace of an unregenerate
state, it is the peace of death; in the
Grave, Job saith, there is peace, there
the wicked cease from troubling, & the soul
dead in sin, is full of peace, the wicked
one troubleth him not.

The peace of God in the soul, is a
peace

peace flowing from a removal of guilt
by justifying grace, Rom. 5. 1. *Being
justified by faith in his blood, we have
peace with God*, but the peace of Satan
in the soul arises, and is maintained by
a stupidity of spirit, and insensibleness
of guilt upon the conscience. on 370

The peace of God is a peace from sin,
that fortifies the heart against it; The
peace of God that passeth all *man's under-
standing*, shall keep your hearts & minds
strong by Christ Jesus, Phil. 4. 7. The
more of this peace there is in the soul,
the more is the soul fortified against
sin; but the peace of Satan is peace
in sin: *the strong man armed keeps the
house, and there is all at peace*, Luk. 11.

21. The Saints peace is a peace with
God but not with sin; the *sinners peace*
is a peace with sin, but not with God;
and this is a peace better broken than
kept; it is a false, a dangerous, an un-
doing peace; my brethren, death and
judgment will drink all peace of yours
except only that which is wrought by
Christ in the soul. It is the fruit of the
blood of sprinkling which he gives quiet-
ness, who can make us able to 1. Joh. 3. 2. 9.
to overcome sin: that shall still be true,
in glory

Why should you keep, who would be
free of that quietness which the flames
of hell will burn in sunder? and yet
how many travel to hell through the
fools Paradise of a false peace!

Oh break off this peace! for we can
have no peace with God in Christ,
whilst this peace remains in our hearts;
Intus existens prohibet alium. The
Lord Christ gives no peace to them that
will not seek it; and that man will ne-
ver seek it, that does not see his need
of it; and he that is at peace in his lusts,
sees no need of the peace of Christ. The
sinner must be wounded for sin, and trou-
bled under it, before Christ will heal his
wounds, and give him peace from it.

Labour after a thorough work of con-
viction; every conviction will not do it:
the almost Christian hath his conviction,
as well as the true Christian; or else he
had never gone so far; but they are not
sound and right convictions; or else he
had gone farther; God will have the
soul truly sensible of the bitterness of
sin, before it shall taste the sweetness of
mercy. The plow of conviction must
go deep, and make deep furrows in
the heart, before God will sow the
precious seed.

The Selfe Confession of a Sinner

precious seed of Grace and Comfort
there, that so it may have depth of
earth to grow in. This is the constant
method of God; First to shew man his
sin, then his Saviour: First his danger,
then his Redeemer: First his wound,
then his cure: First his own vileness,
then Christs Righteousness. We must
be brought to cry out *unclean, unclean,*
to mourn for him whom we have pierced,
and then he sets open for us a fountain
to wash in for sin, and for uncleanness
Zach. 12. 4. *etc.* verses, compared with
Zach. 13. 1. That is a notable place,
Job 33. 17, 28. *He looked upon man, and*
if any say, I have sinned and perverted
that which was right and it profited me
not, He will deliver his soul from going
into the Pit, and his life shall see the
light. The sinner must see the unprof-
itableness of his unrighteousness, be-
fore he profits by Christs righteousness.
The *Israelites* are first stung with the
fiery serpents, and then the brazen
serpent is set up. *Ephraim* is first
thoroughly convinced, and then Gods
bowels of mercy work towards him.
Thus it was with *Paul*, *Manasseh*, the
penitent, &c. So that this is the way to

Numb. 21.
6, 8.

to begin with conviction of sin. *On these fore labour for thorough conviction; and there are three things we should especially be convinced of.*

First, *Be convinced of the evil of sin,* the filthy and heinous nature of it; this is the greatest evil in the world; it wrongs God, it wounds Christ, it grieves the Holy Spirit, it ruineth a precious Soul; all other evils are not to be named with this. My Brethren, though to do sin is the worst work, yet to see sin is the best sight; for sin discovered in its vileness, makes Christ to be desired in his fulness.

But above all, labour to be convinced of the mischief of an unsound heart; what an abhorring it is to God, what certain ruin it brings upon the soul. *Think often upon the Hypocrites Hell; Mat. 23. 35.*

2. *Be convinced of the misery and desperate danger of a natural condition;* for till we see the plague of our hearts, and the misery of our state by nature, we shall never be brought without selves, to seek help in another.

Thirdly, *Be convinced of the need*

incompetency and unworthiness to stand
below Christ Jesus, as minister unto
thy soul in this case: all things besides
Jesus Christ are Physicians of no value;
duties, performances, prayers, tears, Job's
self righteousness, avail nothing in
this case; they make us like the troops
of Temo, to return ashamed at our dis-
appointment from such failing brokers.

Alas! it is an Infinite righteousness
that must satisfy for us; for it is an in-
finite God that is offended by us. If
ever thy sin be pardoned, it is infinite
mercy that must pardon it; if ever thou
be reconciled to God, it is infinite me-
rit must do it; if ever thy heart be
changed, and thy state renewed, it is
infinite power must effect it; and if
ever thy soul escape hell, and be saved
at last, it is infinite Grace must save it.

In these three things, right and sound
conviction lyeth; & where ever the spi-
rit of God worketh these through con-
victions, it is in order to a true and
sound conversion; for by this means the
soul is brought under a right qualifi-
cation for the receiving of Christ.

You must know that a sinner, qua-
rent a sinner, can never come to
Christ

...be dead in sin, in enmity
against Christ, an enemy to God, and
the grace of God; but there are
certain qualifications that come be-
tween the souls dead state in sin, and
the work of conversion and closing
with Christ, whereby the soul is put
into a capacity of receiving the Lord
Jesus Christ. For no man is brought
immediately out of his dead state, and
made to believe in Jesus Christ; there
are *termini mediantes*, some qualifica-
tions coming in between; now sound
convictions are the right qualifications
for the sinner receiving Christ, *for he
came not to call the righteous, but sinners
to repentance*; that is, such as see
themselves sinners, and thereby in a
lost condition; so *Luke* examples it,
*The Son of man is come to seek and to
save that which was lost; he is anointed
and sent to bind up the broken hearted, to
comfort all that mourn.*

Oh therefore if you would be sound
Christians, get sound convictions; ask
those that are believers indeed, and
they will tell you, had it not been
for their convictions, they had never
sought after Christ for sanctification

and salvation: they will tell you they had perished if they had not perished; they had been in *eternal bondage*; but for their *Spiritual bondage*; had they not been lost as to themselves, they had been utterly lost as to Christ.

3. *Never rest in convictions, till they end in conversion*, this is that wherein most men miscarry; they rest in their *convictions*, & take them for *conversion*; as if sin seen, were therefore forgiven, or as if a sight of the want of Grace, were the truth of the work of Grace.

That is a notable place in *Neh. 13. 13. Ephraim is an unwise son, for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children*. The place of the breaking forth of Children is the womb; as the Child comes out of the womb, so is conversion born out of the womb of conviction; now when the child sticks between the womb and the world, it is dangerous, it hazards the life both of mother and Child; so when a sinner rests in conviction, and goes no farther, but sticks in the place of the breaking forth of Children, this is very dangerous, and hazards the life of the soul.

You

...and under con-
viction. Oh what need of resting in
them, do not stay long in the place of
the breaking forth of children, though
it be true that conviction is the first step
to conversion, yet it is not conversion,
a man may carry his convictions along
with him into hell.

What is that which troubleth poor
creatures when they come to die, but
this, I have not improved my con-
victions; at such a time I was convin-
ced of sin, but yet I went on in sin in
the face of my convictions; in such a
sermon I was convinced of such a
duty, but I slighted the conviction; I
was convinced of my want of Christ,
and of the readiness of Christ to par-
don and save, but alas I followed not
the conviction.

My Brethren, remember this, slighted
convictions are the worst Death-bed
Companions. There are two things
especially which above all others
make a Death-bed very uncomfortable.

1. Purposes and promises not per-
formed.
2. Convictions slighted and not im-
proved.

When

The false Professor tried and cast.

When a man comes to purpose to close with Christ, and yet puts them not into execution, and when he is convinced of sin and duty, and yet improves not his convictions; Oh this will sting and wound at last.

Now therefore, hath the Spirit of the Lord been at work in your souls? Have you ever been convinced of the evil of sin, of the misery of a natural state, of the insufficiency of all things under heaven to help, of the falseness and Righteousness of Jesus Christ, of the necessity of resting upon him for pardon and peace, for sanctification and salvation? Have you ever been really convinced of these things? Oh then as you love your own souls, as ever you hope to be saved at last, and enjoy God for ever, improve these convictions, and be sure you rest not in them till they rise up to a thorough close with the Lord Jesus Christ, and so end in a sound and perfect conversion. Thus shall you be not only *almost*, but *altogether a Christian*.

Books printed for, and are to be sold
by *Tho. Parkhurst*, at the Bible and
Three Crowns in *Chesham*.

Polio's

SERMONS on the whole Epistle
of Saint *Paul* to the *Colossians*, by
Mr. *J. Daille*, translated into English
by *F. S.* with Dr. *Tho. Goodwin's*, and
Dr. *Jacob Owens* Epistles Recommen-
datory.

Books 470.

The Door of Salvation opened by
the Key of Regeneration, by *George*
Swinnock, M. A.

The Fiery-Jesuite, or an Historical-
Collection of the rise, increase, doc-
trines and deeds of the Jesuites, exposed
to view for the sake of *London*.

Horologigraphia optica, Dyaling uni-
versal and particular, speculative and
practical, together with a description
of the Court of Arts, by a new Me-
thod, by *Sylvanus Morgan*.

A seasonable Apology for Religion,
by *Maribon Pool*.

The Practical Divinity of the Papists
discovered

discovered to be destructive to true Religion, and Mens souls, by *J. Clarke*.

The Morning Lecture against Popery, or the Principle errors of the Church of *Rome* detected and confuted in a Morning-Lecture, preached by several Ministers of the Gospel in or near *London*.

Four useful discourses: (1.) The art of improving a full and prosperous condition for the glory of God, being an appendix to the art of Contentment in three Sermons, on *Philipp. 4. 12.* (2.) Christian-submission on *1 Sam. 3. 18.* (3.) Christ a Christians life and death is gain, on *Philipp. 4. 21.* Gospel of peace sent to the sons of peace, in six Sermons, on *Luke 10. 5, 6.* by *Jeremiah Burroughs*.

Dr. *Wilds* Letter of thanks & Poems

A new Copy-Book of all sorts of useful hands.

The Saints priviledg by dying, by *Mr. Storr*.

The intercourse of Divine Love between Christ and the Church, or the particular believing soul: in several Lectures on the whole second Chap. of *Eccles.* by *John Collins, D.D.*

A Defence against the fear of Death.
By *Zach. Croston*.

God's Sovereignty displayed. By
W. Goring.

The Goodly *Adam's Ark*, or City of
Refuge in the day of his distress, in five
Sermons, with Mrs. *Moore's* Evidences
for Heaven. By *Edm. Calamy*.

Spiritual Wisdom improved against
Temptation. By *Mr. Meade*.

Bad Conscience. By *Nath. Vincent*.

The Child's Delight, together with
an English Grammar.

Reading and Spelling made easy,
both by *The Lye*.

Fables, Fables, with morals there-
upon, in English Verse.

The Young-man's Instructor and the
Old-man's Remembrance, being an Ex-
planation of the Assemblies Catechism.

Captives bound in Chains, made free
by Christ their Surety; both by *The*
Dislicite.

Sure mercies of *David*, both by
Oliver Heywood.

Antidote of *Quakerism*. By *Stephen*
Scandee.

Immortality of the Soul. By *The*
Washworth.

Method of Meditation.

DE
VC
CS
alt
to
m
th
le
re
to
the
x
m
ce
7
m
T
by
T
be
m
ge
O